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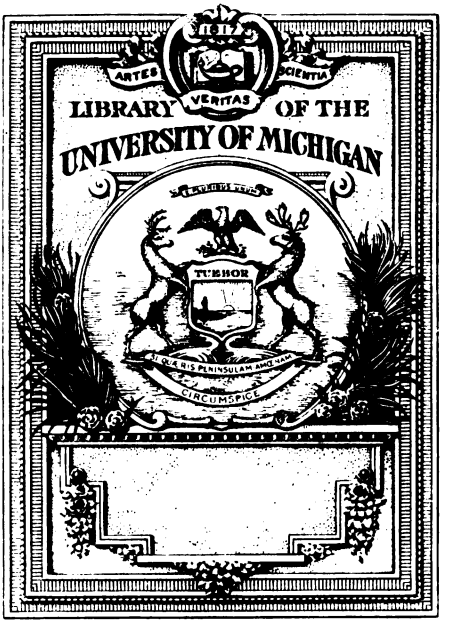
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THE

# WORKS

OF

# AUGUSTUS M. TOPLADY, A. B.

LATE VICAR OF BROAD HEMBURY, DEVON,

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NEW EDITION,

WITH AN ENLARGED MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

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IN SIX VOLUMES.

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VOL. III.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM BAYNES AND SON,
PATERNOSTER ROW;

AND H. S. BAYNES, EDINBURGH.

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1825.

Hom
Sermons

W. GRACIE, PRINTER.

11477.

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# SERMON I.

## A CAVEAT AGAINST UNSOUND DOCTRINES.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A

## DISCOURSE

PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. ANN, BLACKFRIARS;

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 29th, 1770.

Seeing then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.
2 COR. iii. 12.

# SERMON I.

## 1 Timothy i. 10.

*——And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*

St. Paul is commonly, and most probably supposed to have written this epistle about A. D. 65, that is, about two years before his own martyrdom, and about thirty-one after our Lord's ascension. He addressed it to Timothy; who, though a very * young man, had been some time in the ministry, and was then entrusted with the oversight of the church at Ephesus. In the estimation of unprejudiced reason, honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years: but wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age †.

But Timothy, though young, was far from robust. He was only strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His regenerate, heaven-born soul dwelt in a sickly, infirm body. Whence we read of his ὠυχναι ασθενειαι, 1 Tim. v. 23. or frequent indispositions; arising perhaps, originally, from a natural delicacy of constitution; and, certainly, increased by a rigid abstemiousness, and constant course of ministerial labours. Thus our heavenly Father, graciously severe, and wisely kind, takes care to infuse some salutary bitter into his children's cup below; since, were they here to taste of happiness, absolute and unmingled; were not the gales of prosperity, whether spiritual or temporal, counterpoised, more or less, by the needful ballast of affliction; his people (always imperfect here) would

* 1 Tim. iv. 12. † Wisd. iv. 8, 9.

be enriched to their loss, and liable to be overset in their way to the kingdom of God. Wherefore, consummate felicity, without any mixture of wormwood, is reserved for our enjoyment, in a state, where perfect sanctification will qualify us to possess it. In heaven, and there only, the inhabitant shall, no more say, in any sense whatever, I am sick *.

St. Paul, in the opening of his apostolic directions to Timothy, adopts the same simple, majestic, and evangelical exordium, with which the rest of his epistles usually begin. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ; ordained and sent forth by the head of the church, the supreme master of the spiritual vineyard: without whose internal, authoritative commission, none have a real right to minister in sacred things, or to thrust the sickle into God's harvest. For, how can men preach to purpose, so as to be instruments of conviction, comfort and sanctification, except they be sent † of God, and owned of him? whence the apostle adds, by the commandment ‡ of God our Saviour, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our hope. As an English nobleman, who travels to some foreign court, cannot reasonably expect to be received as the representative of his sovereign here, unless charged with an actual delegation, and able to produce the credentials of his mission; no more is any individual authorised to arrogate to himself the honour of a divine embassage, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron §. A sufficient degree of gospel light and knowledge; an ardent love of souls, and a disinterested concern for truth; a competent measure of ministerial gifts and abilities; and, above all, a portion of divine grace and experience; a saving change of heart, and a life devoted to the glory of God; are essential

* Isa. xxxiii. 24. † Rom. x. 15. ‡ Κατ' επιταγην, according to the positive injunction, or express designation. § Heb. v. 4.

pre-requisites to an evangelical discharge of the sacred function.

The first verse may be read thus: Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the express, or authoritative designation of Jesus Christ our God, Saviour, and Lord *. So the passage may be rendered; and so perhaps, it ought to be understood, in its natural and most obvious construction.—Now, even supposing that the apostle had not the divinity of Christ immediately in view, at the time of his writing these words; yet, you must either give up his inspiration, or believe that Christ is, with the Father and the Spirit, God over all, blessed for ever: since, on a subject of such unspeakable consequence, it would have argued a degree of negligence, little short of criminal, had the apostle expressed himself in terms palpably liable to misapprehension. I therefore conclude, that, both as a scholar, and as a Christian; as Gamaliel's pupil, and as an inspired apostle; our sacred penman would have delivered himself in a far more guarded style, had not the Son of God, been indeed God the Son. Either Jesus is the God, Saviour and Lord of his people; or St. Paul was guilty of such inexcusable inaccuracy, as every writer of common sense and common honesty, would be sure to avoid.

He goes on to style the blessed Jesus our hope. Ask almost any man, "Whether he hopes to be saved eternally?" He will answer in the affirmative. But enquire again, "On what foundation he rests his hope?" Here, too many are sadly divided. The pelagian hopes to get to heaven by a moral life, and a good use of his natural powers. The Arminian, by a jumble of grace and free-will, human works, and the merits of Christ. The deist, by an interested observance of the social virtues. Thus merit-mongers, of every denomination, agree in

* Κατ' επιταγην Θεȣ Σωτηρς ἡμων ϗ Κυρεȣ, Ιησȣ Χριςȣ.

making any thing the basis of their hope, rather than that foundation, which God's own hand hath laid in Zion. But what saith scripture? It avers, again and again, that Jesus alone is our hope: to the exclusion of all others, and to the utter annihilation of human deservings. Beware, therefore, of resting your dependence, partly on Christ; and partly on some other basis. As surely as you bottom your reliance partly on the rock, and partly on the sand; so certainly, unless God give you an immediate repentance to your acknowledgement of the truth, will your supposed house of defence fall and bury you in its ruins, no less than if you had raised it on the sand alone. Christ is the hope of glory *.—Faith in his righteousness, received and embraced as our sole justifying obedience before God; and the love of Christ (an inseparable effect of that faith), operating on our hearts, and shining in our lives; are the most solid evidences we can have below, of our acceptance with the Father, and of our being saved in Jesus with an everlasting salvation.

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith; grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have thought that Timothy was not converted under the ministry of St. Paul; and they ground their conjecture on Acts xvi. 1, 2. where Timothy is mentioned as a disciple, and a person well reported of by the Christians at Derbe and Lystra, previous to St. Paul's visitation of those places. That Timothy was a nominal professor of religion, and a youth of circumspect behaviour, are evident from that passage: which external form of godliness was, probably, the effect of the religious † education he had the happiness to receive from his earliest childhood. But, from St. Paul's compellation of him as his own son in the faith; it may, I think, be reasonably inferred,

* Colossians i. 27. † 2 Tim. iii. 15.

that the young disciple was led from the outer court of mere external profession, into the sanctuary of heavenly and spiritual experience, either by the private labours, or under the public ministry of this apostle. And none but those ministers whose endeavours have been blest to the conversion of souls; and those persons who have been born of God by their instrumentality; can form any idea of that spiritual relation and unspeakably tender attachment, which subsist between spiritual fathers and the children of grace whom God hath given them.

Timothy had been a true believer some considerable time before St. Paul wrote this epistle. Consequently, by the grace, mercy, and peace, which he prayed might be the portion of his beloved converts, we are to understand, not the first vouchsafement, but a large increase of those spiritual blessings and comforts: that he might have repeated discoveries, and continued manifestations, of the Father's electing grace; of Christ's redeeming mercy; and experience that sweet peace and joy in believing, which are fruits of the holy Spirit's influence, and flow from fellowship with him. Privileges, these, which unawakened men will always ridicule; but to which, every real Christian will ardently aspire.

Time would fail me, should I attempt to consider all the intervenient verses. I find myself at a loss, not what to say, but what to leave unsaid. However, I shall observe, as briefly as I can, that one grand reason of St. Paul's writing this epistle, was, to put Timothy on his guard against the dissemination of corrupt doctrines, and the insidious arts of corrupt teachers, with which the church of Ephesus, where Timothy was now stationed, seems to have been particularly infested. Unregenerate ministers are much the same in all ages, and in every country: an unconverted preacher in England, and an unconverted preacher in Italy, so far as matters merely spiritual are concerned, stand nearly

on a level. These all are what the Ephesian schismatics were desirous to be, teachers of the law, or legal teachers. And all unconverted people, whether their denomination be protestant or popish, desire to be hearers of the law, and are displeased when they hear any thing else. We are naturally fond of that very law, which, unless the righteousness of Christ is ours, is the ministration of death, pronounces us accursed, and binds us over to everlasting ruin. The pernicious error, against which Timothy was directed to guard his flock, was, a dependence on the law, and the works of it, for salvation. And the reason why this destructive tenet was taught and enforced by some preachers of that day, and has been taught by their successors ever since, is assigned by the apostle; who observes, that those blind guides understood neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed: for, if they had understood any thing of God's inviolable holiness; of the law's inflexible rectitude, extent, and spirituality; of man's total inability to fulfil it perfectly (and without perfect obedience the law cannot justify); they would, at once, have ceased to be teachers of the law, and simply pointed sinners to that Saviour alone, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth *.

Fashionable as the doctrine of legal, conditional justification is, we may say, to every individual that embraces it, There is one that condemns you, even Moses, in whom you trust †, and that every law on which you rest: for its language is, He that breaketh me only in one point, is guilty of all ‡: and, Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them §. Show me the man who has never offended in one point; who hath continued in all things prescribed by Jehovah's perfect law; who loves the Lord with all his

* Romans x. 4. † John v. 45. ‡ James ii. 10.
§ Galatians iii. 10.

heart, and his fellow-creatures as himself; show me the man, who, from the first to the last moment of his life, comes up to this standard: and then you will show me a man who can be justified by works of his own.

But, if no such person could ever be found, Jesus Christ the righteous singly excepted, St. Paul's conclusion stands unshaken, that they, who teach or hold justification by any other obedience than that of Christ, neither know what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Yet, notwithstanding we neither are nor can be justified by the law; still, the uses of the law are numerous and important: whence the apostle takes care to add, that the law is good, or answers several valuable purposes, if a man use it lawfully. Nothing can be more evident, than that, by the law, in this place, is meant the moral law. The ceremonial could not possibly be intended; because it is not now to be adhered to, and is no longer in force: whereas the apostle speaks of a law which is to this very day unrepealed, and of standing use: the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. Of this law, there is a two-fold use; or, rather, an use and an abuse. The use of the law is, among other things, first, to convince us of our utter sinfulness; and then, secondly, to lead us to Christ, as the great and only fulfiller of all righteousness. Now, the law does not answer these important ends, directly, and of itself; but in a subserviency to the holy Spirit's influence *; when that adorable person is pleased to

* "A gracious sight of our vileness," says one of the ablest and most useful writers of the last century, "Is the work of Christ only, by his Spirit. The law is, indeed, a looking-glass; able to represent the filthiness of a person: but the law gives not eyes, to see that filthiness. Bring a looking-glass, and set it before a blind man: he sees no more spots in his face, than if he had none at all. Though the glass be a good glass, still the glass cannot give eyes: yet, if he had eyes, he would, in the glass, see his blemishes. The

make the law instrumental to the conversion of a sinner. In which case, having shaken us out of our self-righteousness, and reduced us to an happy necessity of closing with the righteousness of Christ; the law has still another and a farther use, no less momentous: For, thirdly, it from that moment forward, stands as the great rule of our practical walk and conversation: seeing a true believer is not without law, (ανομος, a lawless person) towards God; but is εννομος, within the bond of the law to Christ *; not exempted from its control, as the standard of moral action; though delivered from its power and execration, as a covenant of works.

These are the three grand, lawful uses of the law. On the other hand, if any of us are so deplorably lost to all sense of Christian duty and gospel privilege, as to suppose, that, by our own partial conformity to the law, how sincere soever it be, we can work out, and work up, a righteousness for ourselves, wherein to stand before the tribunal of God, and for which to obtain any favour at his hand; we use the law unlawfully: we sadly mistake the very end for which the law was promulgated, which was, that, under the efficacy of grace, and the teachings of the blessed Spirit, it might bring us to a knowledge of our † guilt, and a sense of our ‡ danger; convince us of our § helplessness, and as a schoolmaster, bring us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith, and not by the works of the law: for, by the works of the law, as performed by us, shall no flesh be justified ‖.

apostle James compares the law to a looking-glass; and a faculty to represent, is all the law possesseth: But it doth not impart a faculty to see what it represents. It is Christ alone who opens the eyes of men to behold their own vileness and guilt. He opens the eyes, and then, in the law, a man sees what he is."

* 1 Corinthians ix. 21. † Romans iii. 20.

‡ Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2. Hebrews xii. 18, 19, 20, 21.

§ Psalm cxix. 96. Romans viii. 3. ‖ Galatians iii. 24. and ii. 16.

That grand error of the heart (for it is an heart error, as well as an head error; deeply rooted in our corrupt nature, as well as perniciously pleasing to unassisted reason), which misrepresents justification as at all suspended on causes or conditions of human performance; will, and must, if finally persisted in, transmit the unbeliever, who has opportunities of better information, to that place of torment, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The apostle goes on: knowing that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the disobedient, &c. The phrase, a righteous man, means, in its strictly evangelical sense, one that is in Christ; or, who is righteous before God in the righteousness of his Son, apprehended by faith. Now, the law, i. e. the damnatory sentence of it, was not designed for such a person. Weak believers have, sometimes, a good deal to do with the law, and are apt to hover about Mount Sinai; but the law has nothing to do with them; any more than a creditor, who has received ample payment from the hand of a surety, can have any remaining claim on the original debtor. The law took, as it were, our heavenly bondsman by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest. And Jesus acknowledged the demand. He paid the double debt of obedience and suffering, to the utmost farthing. So that, as some render the words under consideration, the law lieth not against a righteous man *; its claims are satisfied; its sentence is superseded; its condemning power is abolished. And whoever have been enabled to fly for refuge to the righteousness of Christ, and to lay hold on the hope set before them, may depend on this as a most certain truth, that Christ hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, having been, himself, made a curse for them †. Such are not

* Δικαιῳ νομος ε κειται. † Gal. iii. 13.

under the law, whether as a covenant of works, to be saved by, or as a denunciation of wrath, to be condemned by, but they are under grace *: under that sweet dispensation of everlasting love, which, when made known to the believing soul, at once ensures the practice of universal godliness, and refers the entire praise of salvation to the unmerited grace of Father, Son, and Spirit. I said, that the dispensation of grace ensures the practice of universal godliness: for, considered as a rule of moral conduct, the law most certainly is designed for believers. And, indeed, only believers can yield real, acceptable obedience to the law: for, without faith, it is impossible to please God †; and whatever proceedeth not from faith is sin ‡. Therefore, if God hath not wrought living faith in your heart, you have never performed one truly good work in your whole life.

St. Paul next proceeds to draw a catalogue of sins, against which the denunciations of the law are most eminently levelled: closing the list with the words first read, And if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. A plain intimation, that error, in principles fundamental, has a very unfavourable influence on practicals; and that, in proportion as the doctrines of God are disbelieved, the commandments of God will be disobeyed. Doctrinals, therefore, are not of that small significance, which the injudicious and the heterodox affect to give out. For, though matters of doctrine are, by some, considered merely as the shell of religion, and experience only as the kernel; yet let it be remembered, that there is no coming at the kernel, but through the shell: and, while the kernel gives value to the shell, the shell is the guardian of the kernel. Destroy that, and you injure this.

The apostle, in the words before us, stamps the evangelical doctrines with the seal of dignity, use-

* Rom. vi. 14. † Heb. xi. 6. ‡ Rom. xiv. 23.

fulness, and importance: as is evident from the epithet he makes use of. He calls the system of gospel truths, sound doctrine: ὑγιαινουσῃ διδασκαλια, salutary, health-giving doctrine; not only right and sound in itself, but conducing to the spiritual strength and health of those that receive it: doctrine, that operates like some efficacious restorative or an exhausted constitution; that renders the sin-sick souls of men healthy, vigorous and thriving; that causes them, through the blessing of divine grace, to grow as the lily, and to cast forth the root as Lebanon, to revive as the corn, and to flourish as the vine, to diffuse their branches, and rival the olive-tree *, both in beauty and fruitfulness.

On the other hand, unsound doctrine has the very opposite effects. It impoverishes our views of God; withers our hopes; makes our faith languid; blasts our spiritual enjoyments; and lays the axe to the very root of Christian obedience. We may say of it, as the Jewish students said, on another occasion, there is death in the pot. If you eat it, you are poisoned. With the utmost attention therefore, should we attend to the apostle's caveat, and avoid every thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.

Many such things there are. I have not time even to recite, much less to expatiate on them all. I shall, therefore, only endeavour, as God may enable me, to point out a few very common, but very capital errors, which are totally inconsistent with sound doctrine.

Previous to my entrance on this part of the subject, I would premise two particulars.

1. That what I am going to observe, does not proceed from the least degree of bitterness against the persons of any, from whom I differ; and,

2. That I am infinitely remote even from the slightest wish of erecting myself into a dictator to others.

* Hos. xiv.

The rights of conscience are inviolably sacred, and liberty of private judgment is every man's birth-right. If, however, any, like Esau, have sold their birth-right for a mess of pottage, by subscribing to articles they do not believe, merely for the sake of temporal profit or aggrandisement; they have only themselves to thank, for the little ceremony they are entitled to.—With regard to myself, as one whom God has been pleased to put into the ministry; above all, into the ministry of the best and purest visible church in the whole world; I should be a traitor to God, to Christ, to the scriptures, and to truth,—unfaithful to souls, and to my own conscience,—if I did not, without fear or favour, declare the entire counsel of God, so far as I apprehend myself led into the knowledge of it. Inconsiderable as I am, many of you are, no doubt, acquainted with the variety of reports that have been spread (especially since this time of my being in town), concerning me, and the doctrines by which I hold it my indispensable duty to abide. I deem myself, therefore, happy, in having one more opportunity to testify the little that I know, concerning that mystery of the gospel, which God ordained, before the world, for our glory. And I desire, in the most public manner, to thank the great Author of all consolation, for a very particular instance of his favour, and which I look upon as one of the most felicitating circumstances of my whole life: I mean, my early acquaintance with the doctrines of grace. Many great and good men, who were converted late in life, have had the whole web of their preceding ministry to unravel, and been under a necessity of reversing all they had been delivering for years before. But it is not the smallest of my distinguishing mercies, that, from the very commencement of my unworthy ministrations, I have not had a single doctrine to retract, nor a single word to unsay. I have subscribed to the articles, homilies, and li-

turgy, five separate times; and that from principle: nor do I believe those forms of sound words, because I have subscribed to them: but I therefore subscribed them, because I believed them.—I set out with the gospel from the very first; and, having obtained help from God, I continued to this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than Moses and the prophets *, Jesus and his apostles, have said before me. And, in an absolute dependance on the divine power and faithfulness, I trust that I shall, to the end, be enabled to count neither health, wealth, reputation, nor life itself, dear to me, so I may finish my course with joy, and fulfil the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God †.

"Careless (myself a dying man)
Of dying men's esteem;
Happy if thou, O God, approve,
Though all beside condemn."

If the most accomplished and respectable person of all heathen antiquity, could declare, that he "would rather obtain the single approbation of Cato, than have a triumph voted to him by the senate;" much more will a Christian minister prefer the approbation of God, to all the evanid eclats of an applauding universe.

I shall arm myself, this afternoon, with a two-fold weapon: with the Bible in one hand; and our church articles in the other. I shall appeal at once, for all I have to say, to the authority of God's unerring oracles; and to their faithful epitome, the decisions of the church of England. They who, perhaps, set light by the scriptures, may yet pay some decent deference to the church; and they,

* Acts xxvi. 22. † Acts xx. 24.

who, it may be, pay little attention to church-determinations, will render implicit credit to the scriptures. So that, between the Bible and the XXXIX articles, I hope I shall be able to carry my point, and, as far as my subject leads me, enter a successful caveat against whatever things are contrary to sound doctrine. In attempting this, I shall fix my foot upon Arminianism; which, in its several branches, is the gangrene of the protestant churches, and the predominant evil of the day.

What think you,

I. Of conditional election? We have, indeed, some, who deny that there is any such thing as election at all. They start at the very word, as if it were a spectre, just come from the shades, and never seen before. I shall waste no time on these men.—They are out of the pale, to which my allotted plan confines me at present. They cannot be church of England men, who proscribe a term that occurs so frequently in her offices and standards of faith; nor can they even be Christians at large, who cashier, with affected horror, a word, which, under one form or other, is to be met with between forty and fifty times, at least, in the New Testament only.

My business, now, is with those who endeavour to save appearances, by admitting the word, while, in reality, they anathematize the things. These profess to hold an election: but then it is a conditional one, and founded, as they suppose, on some good quality or qualities foreseen in the objects of it. Thus, bottoming the purposes of God on the precarious will of apostate men; and making that, which is temporal, the cause of that which was eternal. "The Deity," say persons of this cast, "foreknowing how you and I would behave, and foreseeing our improvements and our faithfulness, and what a proper use we should make of our free-will; ordained us, and all such good sort of people, to everlasting life."

Nothing can be more contrary to sound doctrine, and even to sound reason, than this. It proceeds on a supposition, that man is beforehand with God, in the business of salvation; and that the resolutions of God's will are absolutely dependent on the will of his creatures: that he has, in short, created a set of sovereign beings, from whom he receives law; and that his own purpose and conduct are shaped and regulated according to the prior self-determinations of independent man.—What is this, but atheism in a mask? For, where is the difference, between the denial of a first cause, and the assignation of a false one?

Quite opposite is the decision of inspiration, Romans xi. 6. where the apostle terms God's choice of his people, an election of grace, or a gratuitous election: and observes, that, if it be of grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace were no more grace: but if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work were no more work. Conditional grace is a most palpable contradiction in terms. Grace is no longer grace, than while it is absolute and free. You might, with far greater ease, bring the two poles together, than effect a coalition between grace and works in the affair of election. As far, and as high, as the heavens are above the earth, are the imminent acts of God superior to a dependence on any thing wrought by sinful, perishable man.

Consult our seventeenth article, and you will clearly see, whether conditional election be the doctrine of the church of England. "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind; and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour." Is there a word about condi-

tionality here? On the contrary, is not election, or predestination unto life, peremptorily declared to be God's own "everlasting purpose, decree, counsel, and choice?" The elect are said to be brought to salvation, not as persons of foreseen virtue and pliableness; but, simply and merely, "as vessels made to honour." Add to this, that the article goes on to style election a benefit, or gift; "Wherefore they that be endued with so excellent a benefit."—But how could predestination to blessedness be so termed, if it were suspended on the foresight of something to be wrought by the person predestinated? For, a condition, in matters of spiritual concern, is analogous to a price, in matters of commerce: and a purchased gift, is just as good sense, as conditional grace

Our venerable reformers were too well acquainted with the scriptures, and with the power of God, to err on a subject of such unutterable moment. Whence, in the article now cited, they took care to lay God's absolute and sovereign election as the basis of sanctification; so far were they from representing sanctification as the ground-work of election. Our modern inverters of Christianity, the Arminians, by endeavouring to found election upon human qualifications, resemble an insane architect, who, in attempting to raise an edifice, should make tiles and laths the foundation, and reserve his bricks and stones for the roof. Quot sunt hominum virtutes, totidem sunt Dei dona, said the learned and excellent Du Moulin: and, if sanctification be God's gift, men's goodness could not possibly be a motive to their election: unless we can digest this enormous absurdity, viz. that God's gifts may be conditional and meritorious one of another. Do you imagine, that God could foresee any holiness in men, which himself did not decree to give them? You cannot suppose it, without believing, at the same time, that God is not the author of all good; and that

there are, or may be, some good and perfect gifts, which do not descend from the Father of lights; and that the apostle was widely mistaken, when he laid down this axiom, that it is God, who, of his own good pleasure, worketh in us both to will and to do.

According to our church, God's election leads the van; sanctification forms the centre; and glory brings up the rear *: "Wherefore, they that be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season: they, through grace, obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made the sons of God by adoption." Hitherto, good works are not so much as mentioned. Why so? Because our reformers were Antinomians, and exploded or despised moral performances; by no means. Those holy persons were, themselves, living confutations of so vile a suggestion. The tenor of their lives was as blameless as their doctrine. But they had learned to distinguish ideas, and were too judicious, both as logicians and divines, to represent effects as prior to the causes that produce them. They were not ashamed to betake themselves to the scriptures for information, and to deliver out the living water of sound doctrine, pure and unmingled, as they had drawn it from the fountains of truth. Hence, election, calling, justification, and adoption, are set forth, not as caused by, but as the real and leading causes of, that moral change, which, sooner or later, takes place in the children of God. For thus the article goes on: "They be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and, at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity."

This, then, is the order: 1. Election; 2. Effectual calling; 3. Apprehensive justification; 4. Ma-

* Art. xvii.

nifestative adoption; 5. Sanctification; 6. Religious walking in good works; 7. Continuance in these to the end; which last blessing must, of necessity, be included, because the article adds, that these elect, regenerate persons attain, at length, to everlasting felicity; which they could not do, without final perseverance, any more than you or I, upon our departure from this church, could arrive at our respective homes, if we finally stopt short of them by the way. Such, therefore, being the chain and process of salvation: how impious, and how fruitless, must any attempt be, either to transpose or to put asunder, what God has so wisely and inseparably joined together!

Unless we take absolute election into the account, we must either suppose, that God saves no man whatever; or that those he saves, are saved at random, and without design. But his goodness forbids the first, and his wisdom excludes the latter. Absolute election, therefore, must be taken into the account; or you at once, ipso facto, strike off either goodness or wisdom, from the list of divine perfections. That scheme of doctrine must, necessarily, be untrue, which represents the Deity as observing no regular order, no determinate plan, in an affair of such consequence, as the everlasting salvation of his people. I cannot acquit of blasphemy, that system, which likens the Deity to a careless ostrich, which having deposited her eggs, leaves them in the sand to be hatched or crushed, just as chance happens. Surely, he who numbers the very hairs of his people's heads, does not consign their souls, and their eternal interests, to precarious hazard! the blessings of grace and glory are too valuable and important, to be shuffled and dealt out by the hand of chance. Besides, if one thing comes to pass, either without, or contrary to the will of God; another thing, nay, all things, may come to pass in the same manner; and then, good bye to providence entirely.

When Lysander, the Spartan, paid a visit to king Cyrus (at Corinth, if I mistake not) he was particularly struck with the elegance and order, the variety and magnificence of Cyrus' gardens.—Cyrus, no less charmed with the taste and judgment of his guest, told him, with visible emotions of pleasure, "These lovely walks, with all their beauty of disposition and vastness of extent, were planned by myself; and almost every tree, shrub and flower, which you behold, was planted by my own hand." Now, when we take a view of the church, which is, at once, the house and garden of the living God; that church which the Father loved—for which the Son became a man of sorrows—and which the holy Spirit descends from heaven in all his plenitude of converting power, to cultivate and build anew;—when we survey this living paradise and this mystic edifice, of which such glorious things are spoken *, and on which such glorious privileges are conferred; must we not acknowledge?—Thy sovereign hand, O uncreated love, drew the plan of this spiritual Eden! Thy hand, Almighty power, set every living tree, every true believer, in the courts of the Lord's house. Thy converted people are all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, even the branches of thy planting, the work of thy hands, that thou mayest be glorified †.

Admitting election to be thus a complete, eternal, immanent act in the divine mind, and, consequently, irrespective of any thing in the persons chosen; then (may some say) "farewel to gospel obedience; all good works are destroyed." If, by destroying good works, you mean, that the doctrine of unconditional election destroys the merit of good works, and represents man as incapable of earning or deserving the favour and kingdom of God, I acknowledge the force of the objection. Predesti-

* Psalm lxxxvii. 3. † Isa. lx. 21.

nation does, most certainly destroy the merit of our works and obedience, but not the performance of them: since holiness is, itself, one end of election *, and the elect are as much chosen to intermediate sanctification on their way; as they are to that ultimate glory which crowns their journey's end †: and there is no coming at the one but through the other. So that neither the value, nor the necessity, nor the practice of good works, is superseded by this glorious truth; our acts of evangelical obedience are no more than marshaled, and consigned to their due place; restrained from usurping that praise, which is due to the alone grace of God; and from arrogating that office, which only the Son of God was qualified to discharge.

That election, as taught by the scriptures (and from thence by our reformers), not only carries a favourable aspect on universal piety and holiness, but even ensures the practice of both; is evident, among many other passages from that of the apostle, 2 Thessalonians ii. 13. We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning, i. e. from everlasting, chosen you to salvation through [not for, but through] sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. How very opposite were St. Paul's views of the tendency of this doctrine, from those of the Pelagian and Arminian objectors to it! They are perpetually crying out,

* Eph. i. 4. † "Because we deny salvation by our own deeds," says one of our good old divines, "the papists charge us with being enemies to good works. But am I an enemy to a nobleman, because I will not attribute to him those honours, which are due only to the king? If I say to a common soldier in an army, you cannot lead that army against the enemy; will he therefore say, then I may be gone; there is no need of me? or, if I see a man at his day labour, and say to him, you will never be able to purchase an estate of £10,000 *per annum*, by working in that manner; will he therefore give over his work, and say he is discouraged;"——Mr. Parr's Comm. on Romans, p. 177.

that it "ruins morality, and opens a ready door to licentiousness." He, on the contrary, represents the believing consideration of it as a grand incentive to the exercise of our graces, and to the observance of moral duty. Let us, says he, who are of the day, who are enlightened into the knowledge of this blessed privilege, and can read our names in the book of life; let us, who are thus of the day, be sober; putting on the breast plate of faith and love, and, for an helmet, the hope of salvation: for, God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thessalonians v. 8, 9. Now, if election secures the performance of good works, and, upon its own plan, renders them indispensably necessary; I should be glad to know, how good works can suffer by the doctrine of election? You may as well say, that the sun which now shines into this church, is the parent of frost and darkness. No: it is the source of light and warmth. And you and I want nothing more than a sense of God's peculiar, discriminating favour, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us*, to render us more and more fruitful in every good word and work. As an excellent person† observes, "that man's love to God will be without end, who knows that God's love to him was without beginning."

II. What think you of that fashionable tenet, so contrary to sound doctrine, concerning the supposed dignity and rectitude of human nature in its fallen state? A doctrine as totally irreconcileable to reason and fact, as if an expiring leper should value himself on the health and beauty of his person; or a ruined bankrupt should boast his immensity of wealth.

As soon as we are born we go astray. Nay, I will venture, on scripture authority, to carry the

* Romans v. 5. † Dr. Arrowsmith.

point higher still. All mankind are guilty and depraved before they are born. Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me*. A thunderbolt to human pride, and a dagger in the very heart of natural excellence! Thus speaks the Bible; and thus experience speaks. Our own church, likewise, delivers her judgment in perfect conformity to both.

### Article IX. *Of Original or Birth-Sin.*

"Original sin standeth not in the following" [or imitation] "of Adam, as the pelagians† do vainly talk; but it is the fault" [by imputation], "and corruption" [by internal, hereditary deriva-

* Psalm li. † In this article express mention is made of the pelagians; but nothing is, by name, said of the Arminians. The reason is plain. At the time when our articles passed the two houses of convocation, in the year 1562, Arminius, who was then only two years of age (for he was born A. D. 1560, had not began to sow his tares; he was no more than a schismatic in embryo.—Arminianism is a mushroom of later date, than the re-establishment of the church of England, by Elizabeth. It was not until the latter end of her reign, that Arminianism had any great footing even in Holland; the seat of its nativity. I say in Holland; for there this grand corruption of the reformation began; and from thence it found its way to England. It was a Dutch wind that blew Arminianism over to this island, many years after our articles were re-settled as we now have them. Therefore it is, that only pelagianism is mentioned. However, though Arminianism is younger, by about 1200 years, than pelagianism, its nature and tendency are much the same in fact. The seeming difference lies in little more than this: Pelagius spoke out; Van Harmin (commonly called Arminius), with more art, but less honesty, qualified and disguised the poison, that it might not be quite so alarming. Somewhat like what a good man remarked long ago, concerning the leaven, or false doctrines of the Pharisees: "Christ," says he, "compares the errors of the Pharisees to leaven. Why so? because of its secret mixture with the wholesome bread. You do not make your bread all of leaven; for then, no body would eat it: but you mingle it skilfully, and by that means, both go down together. Thus our Lord intimates, that the Pharisees mixed their errors with some truths; and therefore he directs them to beware, lest, with the truths, they swallow the errors also." Gurnall's Christian Armor, vol. i. p. 104. Octavo edition.

tion] " of the nature of every man who naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam: whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is, of his own nature, inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit. And therefore, in every person born into this world, it" [namely, original, or birth-sin] " deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

Now, what becomes of those plausible, sophistical similies, which compare the natural mind of man to a sheet of white paper? or, to a pliant ozier, which you may bend with ease, this way or that? Or, to a balance in æquilibrio, which you may incline to either side, according as you throw more or less weight into the scale? Or, to a wax tablet, on which you may stamp what impressions you please? Alas! the impression is already made. The thoughts and purposes of man's heart, previous to regeneration, are (spiritually considered) only evil, and that continually *. When converting grace lays hold of us, there is not only an heart of flesh to be given, but an heart of stone to be taken away †. God must not only write his own law on the minds of his people; but must obliterate the law of sin and death, which has a prior footing in every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam. So much, for the spiritual and moral rectitude of man, while unregenerate.———

What think you,

III. Of conditional redemption? Another modish tenet; and no less contrary to reason and sound doctrine, than the preceding. We are gravely told by some, that " Christ did indeed die; but he did not die absolutely, nor purchase forgiveness and eternal life for us certainly: his death only puts us into a salvable state; making God placable, and pardon possible." The whole efficacy of his suffer-

* Genesis vi. 5. † Ezekiel xxxvi. 26.

ings, according to these persons, depends on our being towardly and complying: which if we are, we then come in for a share in the subsidiary and supplementary merits of Christ; having first qualified ourselves for his aid, by a performance of certain conditions required on our part, and entitled ourselves to the favour and notice of God.—According to this scheme (which is only the religion of nature spoiled;—spoiled by an injudicious mixture of nominal Christianity), the adorable Mediator, instead of having actually obtained eternal redemption * for his people, and secured the blessings of grace and glory to those for whom he died; is represented as bequeathing to them only a few spiritual lottery-tickets, which may come up, blanks or prizes, just as the wheel of chance and human caprice happens to turn. Our own righteousness and endeavours, must first make the scale of eternal life preponderate in our favour; and then, the merits of Christ are thrown in, to make up good weight. The Messiah's obedience and sufferings stand it seems, for mere cyphers; until our own free-will is so kind as to prefix the initial figure, and render them of value.—I tremble at the shocking consequences of a system, which (as one well observes) considers the whole mediation of Christ as no more than "a pedestal, on which human worth may stand exalted:" nay, (to use the language of another) which "sinks the Son of God—how shall I speak it?—into a spiritual huckster, who, having purchased certain blessings of his Father, sells them out afterwards to men upon terms and conditions."

But, my brethren, I hope better things concerning you; even the things that accompany salvation. We have not, I trust, so learned Christ; or, rather, so mis-learned him, and the work he came from

* Heb. ix. 12.

heaven to accomplish. God forbid, that we should be found in the number of those, who adopt a principle so highly derogatory from the glory of divine grace, and so deeply dishonourable to the great Saviour of sinners. To the law, and to the testimony. How speaks St. Paul? He avers, that Jesus, by the one offering of himself, hath perfected for ever the salvation of them that are sanctified *. And our Lord expressly declared, in the most solemn prayer that ever ascended from earth to heaven, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do †. Who then art thou, O man, that darest to tack an imaginary supplement of thy own, to the finished work of Christ? Such a conduct were to charge incarnate truth with uttering a falsehood; and would be equivalent to saying, "No! Thou didst not finish the work of redemption which was given thee to do: thou didst indeed, a part of it; but I myself must add something to it, or the whole of thy performance will stand for nothing."

He appeared once in the end of the world, or at the close of the Jewish dispensation,—to do what? To render sin barely pardonable, on the sinner's fulfilment of previous terms? No: but actually to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ‡. The apostle's expression is, that Christ appeared, Εις αθετησιν αμαρτιας, unto the utter abolition of sin; so that, by virtue of his perfect oblation, sin should neither be charged upon, nor eventually mentioned to those, for whom he was offered up. The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve §. In a word, either the death of Christ was not a real and perfect satisfaction for sin; or, if it was, then upon every principle of reason and justice, all that sin must be actually forgiven and done away, which his death was a true

* Heb. x. 14. † John xvii. 4. ‡ Heb. ix. 26. § Jer. l. 20.

and plenary satisfaction for—on the supposition that his redemption was not absolute; it vanishes into no redemption at all. Go over therefore, fairly and squarely to the tents of Socinus; or believe that Christ is the Lamb of God who, in deed and in truth, beareth and taketh away the sin of the world *.

How speaks the church of England concerning this important matter? I refer you to her

Thirty-first article, "Of the one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross.

"The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual: and there is no other sacrifice for sin, but that alone."

Do not let that expression, the whole world stumble you. You remember what our *Te Deum* says: "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." So in the above article;—The oblation of Christ once made for all the sins of the whole world; i. e. the whole world of believers: for God's elect are a world within a world. The whole world is a scripture term, and the compilers of our articles did well in adopting it. But do you imagine that every individual of mankind is meant? surely, no; for, were redemption thus universal, salvation would and must be of equal extent: otherwise, either God the Father would be unjust, or the blood-shedding of Christ could not be (what our articles affirm it to have been) a perfect satisfaction for all sin. Let unlimited redemption be once proved, and I will take upon myself to prove unlimited salvation.

There are many scripture passages, where the phrases world, and whole world, are and must be understood in a restricted sense. So, where St.

* John i. 29.

Paul thus addresses the Roman converts: Your faith is spoken of, or celebrated throughout the whole world, i. e. throughout the whole believing world, or Christian church: for none but believers would applaud and celebrate the Romans for their faith in Christ, Rom. i. 8.—We are of God, says the apostle John, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one, 1 John v. 19. Where, if the whole world denote every individual of mankind, it would follow, that both the apostle himself, and the Christians to whom he wrote, were, at that very time, in the wicked one; and, consequently, that he was guilty of a self contradiction, in saying, we are of God.—In the Book of Revelations, satan is styled the deceiver of the whole world, chap. xii. 9. and the whole world are said to wonder after the beast, chap. xiii. 3. meaning, a considerable part of the world.

Nay, even in daily conversation, it is customary with us to make use of the word world, in a limited signification. So, when we speak of the learned world, the busy world, the gay world, the polite world, the religious world; we do not mean that every man in the world is learned, busy, gay, polite, or religious: we only mean those in the world who are so.

To close this head. Upon the supposition of a random redemption, and a precarious salvation, St. Paul's inference, "Who shall condemn? it is Christ that died;" might be easily answered and overthrown: since, if the Arminian hypothesis be true, millions of those for whom Christ died, will be condemned; and, what heightens the absurdity, condemned on account of those very sins for which Christ did die. A supposition, exploded by the apostle, as impossible.—Surely, Christ knew for what, and for whom, he paid the ransom-price of his infinitely precious blood! Nor would the Father purchase to himself a church of elect persons, for his

own peculiar residence; and then leave satan to run away with as many of the beams and pillars as he pleases. Equally contrary to sound doctrine, is,

IV. The tenet of justification by works.

All human righteousness is imperfect: and to suppose, that God, whose judgment is always according to truth, will, by a paltry commutation, which he every where disclaims, and which the majesty of his law forbids; be put off with not only a defective, but even a polluted obedience, and justify men by virtue of such a counterfeit (at most a partial) conformity to his commandments; to imagine, that the law accommodates itself to human depravation, and, camæleon like, assumes the complexion of the sinners with whom it has to do;—is antinomianism of the grossest kind. It represents the law as hanging out false colours, and insisting on perfection, while, in fact, it is little better than a formal patent for licentiousness; and degrades the adorable law-giver himself into a conniver at sin.

Add to this, that, if God can consistently with his acknowledged attributes, and his avowed declarations, save guilty, obnoxious creatures, without their bringing such a complete righteousness as the law demands; it will necessarily follow, that God, when his hand is in, may save sinners without any righteousness at all, since the same flexibility which (as the Arminians suppose) induces God to dispense with part of his law; may go a step farther, and induce him to set aside the whole.—Moreover, if our persons may be justified, without a legal (i. e. a perfect) righteousness; it will follow, on the same principle, that our sins may be pardoned without an atonement: and then, farewel to the whole scheme of Christianity at once.

There are two grand axioms which enter into the very foundation of revealed religion:

1. That the law will accept no obedience, short of perfect, as the condition of justification; and,

2. That ever since Adam's first offence, man has, and can have, no such obedience of his own.

What then, must a sinner do to be saved? He must believe in, and rest upon, that Saviour, who was, by gracious imputation, made sin for us, that we, by a similar exchange, might be made the righteousness of God in him *. If this be the gospel scheme of salvation, the apostle's assertion will be incontestible: As many of you as are justified by the law, or seek justification on the footing of your own works, are fallen from grace †, revolted and apostatized from that gospel-system, which teaches, that men are justified by the grace of God, flowing through Christ's righteousness alone ‡. Alas! how hardly are we brought to accept salvation as a gift of mere favour! We are for bringing a price in our hands, and coming with money in our sack's mouth: notwithstanding the celestial direction is, Buy wine and milk, without money and without price §; i. e. take as absolute possession of pardon, holiness and eternal life, as if they were your own by purchase; but remember, that you, nevertheless, have them gratis, without any desert, nay, contrary to all desert, of yours.—We did not bribe God to create us; and how is it possible, that we should pay him any thing for saving us?

Zeuxis, the celebrated Grecian painter, used towards the latter part of his life, to give away his pictures, without deigning to accept of any pecuniary recompence. Being asked the reason, his answer was, "I make presents of my pictures, because they are too valuable to be purchased. They are above all price."—And does not God freely give us a part in the book of life, an interest in his Son, and a title to his kingdom; nay, does he not make us a present of himself in Christ; because these blessings are, literally, above all price? too great, too high, too glorious, to be purchased by the works of

* 2 Cor. v. † Gal. v. 4. ‡ Rom. v. 21. § Isa. lv. 1.

man? because we cannot merit them, God is graciously pleased freely to bestow them.

It is equally sad, and astonishing, to observe the ingredients of that foundation, on which self-justiciaries build their hopes of heaven. First, there is a stratum of free-will; then of good dispositions; then of legal performances: next a layer of what they term, divine aids and assistances, ratified and made effectual by human compliances; then a little of Christ's merits; then faithfulness to helps received; and, to finish the motley-mixture, a perseverance of their own spinning. At so much pains is a pharisee, in going about to establish his own righteousness, rather than embrace the Bible-way of salvation, by submitting to the righteousness of God the Son *.

Now, what says the church of England, concerning the cause and manner of our acceptance with the Father? Thus she speaks, and thus all her real members believe:

ARTICLE XI. *Of the Justification of Man.*

"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." One would imagine, this might have been enough to establish the point: but, utterly to preclude self-righteousness from all possibility of access, the church immediately adds, "and not for our own works or deservings."

Here, the old question naturally recurs, "What then becomes of good works?" The plain truth is, that, until a man is justified by faith, he can do no good works at all.

ARTICLE XIII. *Of Works done before Justification.*

"Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God:"

* Rom. x. 3.

and if so, how is it possible that he should justify us on account of them?——But why are they not pleasing to God? "Forasmuch," adds the article, "as they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ."

"Well but," may some say, "admitting that works done before justification do not properly recommend us to God, they may at least, qualify us for believing; and thereby be remotely a condition, sine quâ non, of justification." The church will not allow even of this. For, treating in the above article, of works prior to justification, she adds; "neither do they make men meet to receive grace." This clinches the nail; and cuts up self-righteousness, root and branch.——But does the church stop here? No: to put the whole matter as far beyond doubt, as words can place it, she closes her decision thus: "Yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." Now, if works, wrought previous to justication are sin; it is absolutely impossible that we should be justified by works: unless sin can be supposed to recommend us to God's favour. Which, to imagine, were Antinomianism outright.——What think you,

V. Of the doctrine of uneffectual grace? A doctrine, which represents Omnipotence itself as wishing, and trying, and striving, to no purpose. According to this tenet, God, in endeavouring (for it seems it is only an endeavour) to convert sinners, may by sinners, be foiled, defeated, and disappointed:—He may lay close and long siege to a soul, and that soul can, from the citadel of impregnable free-will, hang out a flag of defiance to God himself, and, by a continual obstinacy of defence, and a few vigorous sallies of free-agency, compel him to raise the siege.—In a word, the holy Spirit, after having for years, perhaps, danced attendance on the will of man, may at last, like a discomfited general,

or an unsuccessful petitioner, be either put to ignominious flight, or contemptuously dismissed, re infectâ, without accomplishing the end, for which he was sent.

Can then, the Lord and giver of life; can he, who, like the adorable Son, is God of God, and God with God; shall the blessed spirit of grace, who is in glory, equal, and in majesty, co-eternal, with the other two persons of the godhead, and has all power both in heaven and in earth;—shall he, who hath the key of David; who openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth *; shall he knock at the door of the human heart, and leave it at the option of free-will to insult him, from the window, and bid him go from whence he came? Surely, men's eyes must be blinded indeed, before they can lay down such a shocking supposition for a religious aphorism; and even go so far as to declare, that unless God is vanquishable by man, "There can be no such thing as virtue or vice, reward or punishment, praise or blame!"

The main root of the error consists greatly, in not distinguishing between the gospel of grace, and the grace of the gospel. The gospel of grace may be rejected; but the grace of the gospel cannot. God's written message in the scriptures, and his verbal message by his ministers, may, or may not be listened to: whence it is recorded, All the day long have I stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people †. But, when God himself comes, and takes the heart into his own hand; when he speaks from heaven to the soul, and makes the gospel of grace a channel to convey the grace of the gospel; the business is effectually done. If God makes a change, who can turn him away ‡.—Whatsoever he doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be

* Rev. iii. 7. † Rom. x. 21. ‡ See the Marginal Translation of Job xi. 10. Eccl. iii. 14.

put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doth it, that men should fear before him *, and acknowledge, that the excellency of converting power is of him, and not of us †.

A modern schismatic, now living, thought he both showed his wit, and graveled his opponents, in saying, that, according to the doctrine of our church, "The souls of men can no more vanquish the saving grace of God, than their bodies can resist a stroke of lightning." I would ask the objector, whether he ever knew of any lightning, like that which flashed from the Mediator's eye, when he turned and looked upon Peter? And something similar is experienced by every converted person. The Lord turns and looks upon a sinner, who then relents, and cries out, with his whole heart, O Lord my God, other lords besides thee, have had dominion over me; but now, by thee, through the energy of thy renewing influence, will I make mention of thy name only.—Whom have I in heaven, but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire, in comparison of thee ‡.—When God says to the heart, seek thou my face; the reply is, and cannot but be, thy face, Lord, will I seek §. For God, who, in the beginning of the creation, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath, by an exertion of power, equally invincible, and as certainly effectual, shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God, as it is manifested in the person and grace of Jesus Christ ‖. Wherefore then do men say, we are lords, and we will come no more unto thee *, except we ourselves choose it?—Alas, alas! did the matter rest with us, we should never choose to come to God at all. If he did not first change our wills, we should never even will that great change, that internal regenera-

* 2 Cor. iv. 7. † Isa. xxvi. 13. ‡ Psalm lxxiii 25.
§ Psalm xxvii. 8. ‖ 2 Cor. vi. 6. * Jer. ii. 31.

tion, without which, no man can see the kingdom of heaven *. God, I am bold to declare, would not have been Lord of any hearts, now under this roof, had he not, by the constraining power of his own love, effectually gained them over, and invincibly attached them to his blessed self. The glorious and independent Creator made us at first, without our leave; and yet, according to the modern system, he must ask and wait for our leave, before he can make us anew!

Do you desire to know the judgment of the church upon this point? You have it in her XVIIth article; where speaking of God's elect people, she asserts, that "they are called, according to his purpose, by his Spirit working in due season:" and immediately adds, that "they through grace, obey the calling." God's converting call, therefore, is such as produces obedience to it: i. e. it is triumphantly efficacious; and rendered successful, not by the will and towardliness of the person called, but by the power and grace of him that calleth. Nay, so far is the efficacy of divine influence from being suspended on any internal or external ability of the creature, that in our Xth article, concerning free-will, the church expresses herself thus: "The condition of man, since the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn, nor" even "prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God."

VI. What think you of Antinomianism?

By Antinomianism, I mean, That doctrine, which teaches, "That believers are released from all obligation to observe the moral law, as a rule of external obedience: That, in consequence of Christ's having wrought out a justifying righteousness for us, we have nothing to do, but to sit down, eat, drink, and be merry; that the Messiah's merits supersede

* John iii. 3.

the necessity of personal inherent sanctification; and that all our holiness is in him, not in ourselves; that the aboundings of divine grace give sanction to the commission of sin; and, in a word, that the whole preceptive law of God is not established, but repealed and set aside, from the time we believe in Christ." This is as contrary to sound doctrine, as it is to sound morals; and a man need only act up to these principles, to be a devil incarnate. It is impossible that either the Son of God, who came down from heaven to perform, and to make known his Father's will; or that the Spirit of God, speaking in the scriptures and acting upon the heart, should administer the least encouragement to negligence and unholiness of life. Therefore, that opinion, which supposes personal sanctification to be unnecessary to final glorification, stands in direct opposition to every dictate of reason, to every declaration of scripture.

Indeed, the very nature of election, of faith, and of all covenant grace whatever, renders holiness absolutely indispensable: forasmuch as, without a spiritual and moral resemblance of God, there can be no real felicity on earth, nor any future enjoyment of heaven.—Suppose, we appeal to experience? I speak now to you, who know in whom ye have believed; to you, who have received the atonement, and who have been sensibly reconciled to God by the death of his Son. If, at any time, ye have been off your guard, and suffered to lapse into sin; how have ye felt yourselves afterwards? Ye have gone with broken hearts and with broken bones*. Ye have found it to be indeed an evil and a bitter thing, to depart, though ever so little, from the Lord. Ye know by dismal experience, that the way of transgressors is hard; and that sin, like Ezekiel's roll, is written within and without, with lamentation and

* Psalm li.

mourning and woe. The gall of bitterness is inseparable from the bond of iniquity. Upon the principle, therefore, of mere self-interest (to go no higher), a true believer cannot help aspiring to holiness and good works.

Heaven must be brought down into the human soul, ere the human soul can be fitted for heaven. There must, as the school men speak, be "a congruity and similitude between the faculty and the object," i. e. there must be an inward meetness for the vision and glory of God, wrought in you by his holy Spirit, in order to render you susceptible of those exalted pleasures, and that fulness of joy, which are in his presence, and at his right hand, for ever. Was thy soul, O unconverted sinner, to be this moment, separated from thy body, and even admitted into heaven (supposing it was possible for an unregenerate spirit to enter there); heaven would not be heaven to thee. You cannot relish the blessedness of the new Jerusalem, unless God, in the mean while, makes you partaker of a new nature. The Father chose his people to salvation; the Son purchased for them the salvation, to which they were chosen; and the blessed Spirit fits and qualifies them for that salvation, by his renewing influences: for, as a dead man cannot inherit an estate, no more can a dead soul (and every soul is spiritually dead, until quickened and born again of the Holy Ghost) inherit the kingdom of God. Yet, sanctification and holiness of life do not constitute any part of our title to the heavenly inheritance; any more than mere animal life entitles a man of fortune to the estate he enjoys: he could not, indeed, enjoy his estate, if he did not live; but his claim to his estate arises from some other quarter. In like manner, it is not our holiness that entitles us to heaven; though no man can enter heaven, without holiness. God's gratuitous donation, and Christ's meritorious righteousness, constitute our

right to future glory: while the Holy Ghost, by inspiring us with spiritual life (of which spiritual life, good works are the evidences and the actings) puts us into a real capability of fitness for that inheritance of endless happiness, which, otherwise, we could never in the very nature of things, either possess or enjoy.

"Let it be observed," says one of the most learned and judicious writers of this age, "that Christ's active obedience to the law for us, in our room and stead, does not exempt us from personal obedience to it; any more than his sufferings and death exempt us from corporal death, or from suffering for his sake. It is true, indeed, we do not suffer and die, in the sense he did; to satisfy justice, and atone for sin: so neither do we yield obedience to the law, in order to obtain eternal life by it. By Christ's obedience for us, we are exempted from obedience to the law, in this sense: but not from obedience to it, as a rule of walk and conversation, by which to glorify God, and express our thankfulness to him for his abundant mercies."—Travellers inform us, that in Turkey, the partisans of the several denominations there, are distinguished by the colour of their shoes: so that, if you meet any person in the streets, you need only look at his feet, to know of what religion he is. And may not the truth of grace be discerned, to at least, an high degree of probability, by the life and conversation of those who make a religious profession? The man who says that he knows God, and in works denies him; who calls Christ, Lord, Lord, but does not the things that he enjoins; whose voice, indeed, is Jacob's voice, but his hands are the hands of* Esau; resembles our Saviour's persecutors and mur-

* A very capital painter, in London, lately exhibited a piece, representing a friar, habited in his canonicals. View the painting at a distance, and you would think the friar to be in a praying

derers of old, who bowed their knees, and cried, Hail King of the Jews! while they spit in his face, and smote him with the palms of their hands. The hypocrite's profession is dark and opaque; but that of a real saint is pellucid and transparent. The rays of grace in a genuine believer, pervade his whole behaviour, and are transmitted through all the parts of his practical walk. Though every moral man is not therefore a Christian, yet every Christian is necessarily a moral man.

When Flaminius, the Roman general, did, at the Isthmian games, announce freedom to Greece, in the name of the senate and people of Rome, the transported Greeks received the glorious news with such acclamations of gratitude, and thunder of applause, that some ravens which were flying over the Stadium, dropt down to the earth, stunned and senseless: the very games and exercises were neglected, and nothing but bursting eclats of admiring joy, engrossed the day.—So, when the holy Spirit of consolation announces gospel liberty, and eternal redemption, to the souls of the awakened, the love of sin, and the ravens of detested lusts, fall before his sacred influence. Both the toils and the pleasures of the world are regarded as insignificant, when set in competition with the one thing needful. Holy wonder, love and joy, quite engage the powers of the believer's mind, during the spring-tide consolations of his first manifestative espousals; and a sure foundation is, from that moment, laid, for the performance of all those good works, which are the fruits of salvation by grace. While faith is in ex-

attitude: his hands are clasped together, and held horizontally to his breast; his eyes meekly demissed, like those of the publican in the gospel; and the good man appears to be quite absorbed in humble adoration and devout recollection.—But take a nearer survey, and the deception vanishes: the book, which seemed to lie before him, is discovered to be a punch-bowl, into which, the wretch is all the while, in reality only squeezing a lemon.——How lively a representation of an hypocrite!

ercise, and a sense of divine favour is warm upon the heart, a child of God is as much steeled to the allurements of sin, as Octavius was cool to the meretricious charms of Cleopatra.

Thus, conscientious obedience, though neither the cause nor condition of our justification in the sight of God, nor of our admittance into his glory; is, nevertheless, an essential branch both of privilege and duty, as well as a necessary indication of our acceptance in the beloved. This is the point of view, in which our church considers good works: viz. not as preceding conditions of salvation, but as subsequent testimonies and marks of salvation already obtained.

ARTICLE XII. *Of Good Works.*

"Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out, necessarily, of a true and lively faith: insomuch that, by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit."

VII. What think you concerning the tenet of sinless perfection? which supposes, that the very inbeing of sin may, on earth, be totally exterminated from the hearts of the regenerate; and that believers may, here, be pure as the angels that never fell, yea, (I tremble at the blasphemy)—holy as Christ himself. To hold this heresy, is the very quintessence of delusion; but to imagine ourselves really in the state it describes, were the very apex of madness. Yet, many such there are: some such I myself have known.

Indwelling sin and unholy tempers do, most certainly, receive their death's wound in regeneration: but they do not quite expire until the renewed soul is taken up from earth to heaven. In the

mean time, these hated remains of depravity will, too often, like prisoners in a dungeon, crawl toward the window (though in chains), and show themselves through the grate. Nay, I do not know, whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery, be not frequently more violent in a regenerate person, than even in one who is dead in trespasses: as wild beasts are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded. A person of the amplest fortune cannot help the harbouring of snakes, toads, and other venomous reptiles on his lands; but they will breed and nestle, and crawl about his estate, whether he will or no. All he can do, is to pursue and kill them, whenever they make their appearance; yet, let him be ever so vigilant and diligent, there will always be a succession of those creatures, to exercise his patience and engage his industry. So is it with the true believer, in respect of indwelling sin.

Would you see a perfect saint? you must needs go out of the world, then, you must go to heaven, for the sight: forasmuch as there only are the spirits of just men made perfect*. This earth on which we live, never bore but three sinless persons: our first parents, in the short state of innocence; and Jesus Christ, in the days of his abode below. Of the whole human race beside, it always was, and ever will be true, that there is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not. The most forward and towering professors are not always the firmest and most solid Christians. Naturalists tell us, that the oak is a full century in growing to a state of maturity: yet, though perhaps the slowest, it is one of the noblest, the strongest, and most useful trees in the world. How preferable to the flimsy, watery, shooting willow.

* Heb. xii. 23.

Our church enters an express caveat against the pestilent doctrine of perfection, in her 15th article, entitled, " Of Christ alone without sin :" where she thus delivers her judgment:

" Christ in the truth of our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and in his spirit. He came to be a lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin, as St. John saith, was not in him. But all we the rest (although baptized and born again in Christ) yet offend in many things: and, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

So, it is declared, about the middle of the 9th article, that the " infection of nature doth remain; yea, in them that be regenerated."—Let me just mention,

VIII. One more particular, contrary to sound doctrine: I mean, the assertion of some, who would fain persuade us, that it is impossible for us to receive knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin. Such a denial is very opposite to the usual tenor of God's proceeding with his people in all ages. The best believers, and the strongest, may, indeed, have their occasional fainting fits of doubt and diffidence, as to their own peculiar interest in Christ; nor should I have any great opinion of that man's faith, who was to tell me that he never had any doubts at all. But still there are golden seasons when the soul is on the mount of communion with God; when the spirit of his Son shines into our hearts, and gives us boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him *; and when sunt sine nube dies, may be the Christian's exulting motto. Moreover, a person, who is at all conversant with the spiritual life, knows as certainly, whether he indeed enjoys the light of

* Eph. iii. 12.

God's countenance *, or whether he walks in darkness †; as a traveller knows, whether he travels in sun-shine, or in rain. And, as a great and good ‡ man observes, "It is no presumption to read what was God's gracious purpose toward us of old, when he, as it were, prints his secret thoughts, and makes them legible in our effectual calling. In this case, we do not go up into heaven, and pry into God's secrets: but heaven comes down to us, and reveals them."

It may, indeed, be objected, that the scripture doctrine of assurance, when realized into an actual possession of the privilege, "may tend to foster pride, and promote carelessness." It cannot lead to pride; for all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, know by indubitable experience (and one fact speaks louder than an hundred speculations), that believers are then lowest at God's footstool, when they are highest on the mount of assurance. Much indulgence from earthly parents, may, indeed, be productive of real injury to their children; but not so are the smiles of God; for the sense of his favour sanctifies, whilst it comforts.—Nor can the knowledge of interest in his love tend to relax the sinews of moral diligence, or make us heedless how we behave ourselves in his sight. During those exalted moments, when grace is in lively exercise; when the disciple of Christ experiences

"*The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy.*"

corrupt nature (that man of sin within), and every vile affection, are stricken, as it were, with a temporary apoplexy; and the believer can no more, for the time being, commit wilful sin, than an angel of light would dip his wings in mud. No: it is when we come down from the mount, and mix again with the world, that, like Moses, we are in danger of

* Psalm lxxxix. 15. † Isa. l. 10. ‡ Gurnall, vol. i. p. 127.

breaking the tables of the law." But is it not enthusiasm to talk of holding intercourse with God, and of knowing ourselves to be objects of his special love?" No more enthusiastical (so we keep within scripture bounds), than it is for a favourite child to converse with his parents, and to know that they have a particular affection for him. Neither, in the strictest reason and nature of things, is it at all absurd, to believe and expect, that God can and does, and will, communicate his favour to his people, and manifest himself to them, as he does not to the world * at large.

Yet, though God is thus graciously indulgent to many of his people (I believe to all of them at some time or other, between their conversion and death); still, if they trespass against him, he will not let their offences pass unnoticed nor uncorrected. Though grace itself is inamissible, the comfort of it may be sinned away. Salvation is sure to all the redeemed; but the joy of it may be lost. Psalm li. 12. Great peace have they that love thy law; and they only. Holiness and consolation are wisely and intimately connected. In proportion as we are enabled to live near to God, to walk humbly and closely with him, and to keep our moral garments clean, we may hope for freedom of intercourse with him, and to assure our hearts before him †: like the happy believers of old, concerning whom it is said, that they walked at once in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost ‡.

Let not, however, what has been observed concerning the blessing of assurance, stumble or discourage the feeble of God's flock, on whom, for reasons wise and good, it may not, hitherto, have been his pleasure to bestow this unspeakable gift. The scripture, plainly, and repeatedly, distin-

* John xiv. 21, 22. † John iii. 19. ‡ Acts ix. 31.

guishes between faith; the assurance of faith; and the full assurance of faith: and the first may exist where the other two are not. I know some who have, for years together, been distressed with doubts and fears, without a single ray of spiritual comfort all the while. And yet, I can no more doubt of their being true believers, than I can question my own existence as a man. I am sure they are possessed, not only of faith in its lowest degree, but of that which Christ himself pronounces great faith *: for they can at least, say, Lord, I am not worthy, that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed.—Faith is the eye of the soul; and the eye is said to see almost every object but itself; so that you may have real faith, without being able to discern it. Nor will God despise the day of small things.——Little faith goes to heaven, no less than great faith; though not so comfortably, yet altogether as surely. If you come merely as a sinner, to Jesus, and throw yourself, at all events, for salvation, on his alone blood and righteousness, and the grace and promise of God in him, thou art as truly a believer, as the most triumphant saint that ever lived. And, amidst all your weakness, distresses and temptations, remember, that God will not cast out nor cast off the meanest and unworthiest soul that seeks salvation only in the name of Jesus Christ the righteous. When you cannot follow the rock, the rock shall follow you; nor ever leave you, for so much as a single moment, on this side the heavenly Canaan. If you feel your absolute want of Christ, you may, on all occasions, and in every exigence, betake yourself to the covenant love and faithfulness of God, for pardon, sanctification and safety; with the same fulness of right and title, as a traveller leans upon his own staff, or as a weary labourer

* Matth. viii. 8. 10.

throws himself on his own bed, or as an opulent nobleman draws upon his own banker for whatever sum he wants.——I shall only detain you farther, while I warn you.

IX. Against another limb of Arminianism, totally contrary to sound doctrine: I mean, that tenet, which asserts the possibility of falling finally from a state of real grace. God does not give, and then take away. He does, indeed, frequently resume what he only lent; such as health, riches, friends, and other temporal comforts: but what he gives, he gives for ever. In a way of grace, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*: he will never repent of bestowing them; and every attribute he has, forbids him to revoke them. The blessings of his favour are that good part, which shall not be taken from those that have it†.

A parent of moderate circumstances, may give his children something to set up with in the world, and address them to this effect: "I have now done for you all that is in my power to do, and gone as far as my circumstances will allow: you must, from henceforward, stand on your own feet, and be good husbands of the old stock. The preservation and improvement of what I have given you, must be left to chance and yourselves." In this very view does Arminianism represent the Great Father Almighty. But how does scripture represent him? as saying, I will never leave thee, or forsake thee‡.—Even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you§.——My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand||. In a word;

* Rom. xi. 29. † Luke x. 42. ‡ Heb. xiii. 5. § Isa. xlvi. 4. || John x. 28. True, said an Arminian schismatic, grown grey in the service of error, and who still goes up and down sowing

if any of God's people can be finally lost, it must be occasioned, either by their departing from God, or by God's departure from them. But they are certainly and effectually secured against these two, and these only possible sources of apostasy. For, thus runs the covenant of grace; I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. xxxii. 40. Now, if God will neither leave them, nor suffer them to leave him, their final perseverance in grace to glory must be certain and infallible.

Having greatly exceeded the limits I designed, I shall forbear to adduce the attestations of the church of England, to the doctrines of assurance and perseverance; especially, seeing I have done this somewhat largely elsewhere *.——I must not, however, conclude without observing, that irreversible justification on God's part, and subjective assurance of indefectibility on ours, do by no means invest an offending Christian with immunity from sufferings

his tares, seeking whom he may devour, and compassing sea and land to make proselytes: "True, Christ's sheep cannot be plucked forcibly out of his hand by others; but they themselves may slip through his hands, and so fall into hell, and be eternally lost." They may slip, may they? as if the Mediator, in preserving his people, held only a parcel of eels by the tail! Is not this a shameless way of slipping through a plain text of scripture? But I would fain ask the slippery sophister, how we are to understand that part of the last cited passage, which expressly declares, concerning Christ's people, that they shall never perish? since perish they necessarily must, and certainly would, if eventually separated from Christ; whether they were to be plucked out of his hands, or whether they were only to slip through them. I conclude then, that the promise made to the saints, that they shall never perish, secures them equally against the possibility of being either wrested from Christ's hand, or of their own falling from it; since, could one or other be the case, perish they must, and Christ's promise would fall to the ground.

* The church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism.

and chastisement. Thus, Nathan said to David, The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die: yet was he severely scourged, though not disinherited, for his transgressions. The tenor of God's immutable covenant with the Messiah, and with his people in him, is this: His seed will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. I have sworn, once for all, by my holiness, that I will not lie unto Jesus the Antitypical David, by suffering any of his redeemed people to perish *. Hence, as it is presently added, they shall be established for ever, as the moon; and as the faithful witness in heaven: nay, they shall stand forth and shine, when the sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; when the stars shall drop from their orbits, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. As an excellent person somewhere observes, "Our own unbelief may occasionally, tear the copies of the covenant, given us by Christ; but unbelief cannot come at the covenant itself. Christ keeps the original deed in heaven with himself, where it can never be lost."

Upon the whole: are these things so? Then,

1. How great and how deplorable, is the general departure from the scripture doctrines of the church of England, and the first principles of the reformation!

2. How blessed are the eyes that see! how happy are the hearts that feel, the propriety and the energy of these inestimable truths! And,

* Psalm lxxxix. 20.

3. How ought such to demonstrate their gratitude, by a practical glorification of God, in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are his! Resemble thunder, in your boldness for God, and your zeal for truth: but let your lives shine as lightning, and flash conviction in the faces of those, who falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ, and as falsely charge the doctrines of God with a licentious tendency.—But let not your zeal be of the inflammatory kind: let it be tempered with unbounded moderation, gentleness, and benevolence; and shine forth as the sun, with healing in its wings. Remember who it is, that hath made you to differ from others; and that a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven, John iii. 27.

Not unto us, therefore, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name alone, be the praise of every gift, and of every grace ascribed; for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Amen.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS sermon was first preached at St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, April 22. Some persons then present, to whose judgment and request I pay the highest deference, desired me to retrieve as much of it as I could, the Sunday following, at St. Ann's; with a view to its being taken in short-hand, and published.

The loss of my nearest relative, soon after this sermon was preached, and the many avocations occasioned by that lamented and unexpected event, account but too well, for the delay, with which the publication has been attended. Having, however, transcribed it at last, from the notes of the person who penned it at the time of its delivery, I now transmit it to the press, most affectionately and respectfully inscribed to my dear London friends; whose favours, equally great, numerous and unmerited, I have no other public way of acknowledging.

London, July 3, 1770.

# POSTSCRIPT.

TO THE

PARISHIONERS OF ST. MATTHEW, BETHNAL-GREEN.

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE the preceding sermon could get through the press, the Rev. Mr. Haddon Smith, who, it seems, serves you as curate, has thought proper to publish a discourse, which he delivered in opposition to this, the Sunday after I had the honour of preaching it before you.

It would render that unthinking, but, I would hope, well-meaning gentleman, much too considerable, were I either to address him by name, or descend to canvass a performance, wherein heat and scurrility endeavour to supply the total vacuity of argument.—For Mr. Smith to enter the lists, with such exceeding fierceness, against a sermon which he did not hear, and which, hitherto, he has had no possible opportunity of reading, discovers a weakness and temerity in him, which sink him as low beneath my notice, as the established doctrines of our excellent church rise superior to his impotence of censure. When the gentleman shall ap-

pear to have at all considered the important articles of faith, on which he has presumed to animadvert: when the sails of his furious zeal shall be counter-ballasted by some little degree of judgment: and when he has learned to express himself, if not with Christian decency, yet with common grammatical propriety; then, and not till then, shall I deem him a proper object of attention.

You gentlemen, can testify, that I never once appeared in your pulpit, but at your own particular request: a request which I could not, possibly, have any interested motives for complying with, as I never accepted of the smallest gratuity for my attendance. Is it, for this, that the enraged curate has repeatedly traduced me from the pulpit, and now insults me from the press?

For my own part, I am so far from entertaining any resentment against Mr. Smith (with whom I do not remember to have exchanged five words in my life, and whom I should not even know at sight), or from being deterred by his unmerited abuse, that, should I live to see London again, I shall always deem myself happy to wait on you, as usual, whenever either your own desire, or the interest of your public charity, may command. And, as so many of you have favoured me with uncommon civility and attention, I am encouraged to offer one request; a request, not in behalf of myself, but of Mr. Smith; viz. that his ill-judged and unbecoming warmth may not so far alienate your affection from his person, as to make you persist in withdrawing those usual proofs of your beneficence, which formerly you have favoured him with; and which, I am sorry to be informed, have of late, through his defect of candour and humility, been considerably lessened.

My sermon and his, are now before the public. The rashness, and seeming malignity, with which

he appears desirous to plunge into the depths of an unequal contest, might, in the opinion of some, justify me in the amplest severity of animadversion. But I spare him. I cannot prevail with myself, to render evil for evil, or railing for railing. On the contrary, I wish and pray, that divine grace may cause him to partake of the mind which was in Christ Jesus; and that he may, by the same Almighty influence, be made to experience, to believe, and to preach, the inestimable truths of that gospel, which Jesus taught.

Mr. John Wesley (on whose plan of doctrine, your curate seems in great measure, to have formed his own) is the only opponent, I ever had, whom I chastised with a studious disregard to ceremony. Nor do I, in the least, repent of the manner in which I treated him. To have refuted the forgeries and perversions of such an assailant, tenderly, and with meekness falsely so called, would have been like shooting at an highwayman with a pop-gun, or like repelling the sword of an assassin with a straw. I rather blame myself, on a review, for handling Mr. Wesley too gently; and for not acquainting the world with all I know, concerning the man and his communication. I only gave him the whip, when he deserved a scorpion.

But, as to Mr. Smith, he, hitherto, amidst all his ignorance and unguardedness, merits a milder treatment. Want of talents and of thought, appear in every paragraph of his sermon: but I am willing to believe him not wholly destitute of integrity. Though he opposes the doctrines of the church of England, with virulence; yet, he seems to do so, from principle. Under this persuasion, I at present, give him rope. Hereafter, should he rise into any thing like a respectable antagonist, I may perhaps hook him, and pull him in. Until then, I take my leave both of the curate and of

his preachment, with that justly admired line, which is at once equally picturesque of his behaviour, and expressive of my fixed determination;

Tu *loqueris lapides:* Ego *byssina verba reponam.*

I am, with much respect and regard,

GENTLEMEN,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

AUGUSTUS TOPLADY.

BROAD HEMBURY,
August 31, 1770.

# SERMON II.

## JESUS SEEN OF ANGELS.

### PART I.

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF BROAD HEMBURY, DEVON;

DECEMBER 25th, 1770.

Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—1 JOHN iv. 10.

# SERMON II.

## 1 TIM. iii. 16.

### ———*Seen of Angels.*———

WITHIN the compass of this single verse, St. Paul comprises several fundamental articles of the Christian faith. The whole passage, so far as it extends, may be considered as a little system of divinity; and literally deserves the name of the Apostles' Creed. And such compendiums as this, of which there are many in holy scripture, seem to have given the first hint, at least, to the primitive churches, of declaring their attachment to Jesus and his gospel, in set formularies and confessions of faith.

Indeed, the apostle himself appears to intimate something of this kind, when writing to the Romans, he told them, Ye have from the heart, submitted to that mould, or model of doctrine, into which ye were delivered *. So likewise, in his

* Rom. vi. 17. Υπηκουσατε δε εκ καρδιας εις ον παρεδοθητε τυπον της διδαχης. In allusion, either to softened wax, which implicitly admits the impression of the stamp; or to metals, reduced to a state of fusibility, which assimilate themselves to the figure of the mould, into which they are cast.—The acute and learned author of the Confessional seems very unwilling to admit the probability of St. Paul's referring to any fixed formulary of doctrine, either in the passage last cited, or in the correspondent ones of 1 Tim. iv. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 3. and 2 Tim. i. 13. Let us hear this able writer speak for himself. "The Greek words, in these several passages which are supposed to signify this standard or fixed formulary, run thus: Τυπος διδαχης.——Υποτυπωσις υγιαινοντων λογων—Λογοι πιστεως και καλης διδασκαλιας—Υγιαινοντες λογοι οι του κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου, και η κατ' ευσεβειαν διδασκαλια. Now, when a capable and unprejudiced reader considers the variety of expression in these several passages, he will probably be inclined to think, that a fixed formulary of doctrine is the last thing a plain man would look for in them. A fixed formulary, one would think, should have a fixed title. Nor is it at all probable,

second epistle to Timothy, he thus directs that young divine: Hold fast the form of sound words,

that one and the same form of words should be described, in terms, which may denote an hundred different forms." Confessional, p. 95, 96. 3d. Edit.

1. It matters very little, whether the apostolic formularies, delivered to different persons, were syllabically, and verbatim, one and the same, or not. Their being materially, and substantially the same, as to their sense and meaning, was sufficient to secure the point aimed at, viz. unity of doctrine. The variety of titles, therefore, assigned to these fixed formularies (for such there seem to have been), is in reality, no objection to the doctrinal unity of the formularies themselves, supposing them to have been ever so numerous. But, 2. After all, there is no necessity for admitting even a verbal diversity of apostolical standards; at least, of those drawn up by one and the same apostle. Those for instance, given by St. Paul, were in all probability, not only materially, but verbally alike. Whoever considers this apostle's masterly command of the copious language, in which he wrote, will hardly I should imagine, be surprised at the variety of titles, given in different parts of his epistles, to perhaps one and the same summary: especially, as those various titles are all coincident in sense, and one as well as another, strictly compatible with a fixed apostolic formulary. Thus, for example, the XXXIX articles of the church of England may be termed (I mean by the few who believe them) Τυπος διδαχης, Ὑποτυπωσις ὑγιαινοντων λογων, Δωγοι πιστεως, &c. and yet remain the same identical articles, under all this variety of titles.

But the Confessionalist is inclined to believe, that in Rom. vi. 17. τυπος διδαχης is, in particular, a phrase "absolutely unintelligible," if not referred to "the exemplification of the Christian doctrine, in the practice of pious believers." If, however, we read the apostle's words, through the medium of the metaphor to which he (I think, plainly) alludes; the absolute unintelligibility, of which the learned writer seems apprehensive, vanishes at once: and a sense arises (not very favourable indeed, to the main hypothesis of the Confessional, but) proper in itself, unforced in its deduction, and very intelligible by all. A sense too, which is at least, extremely probable to have been that the eloquent apostle intended to convey; as his admirable compositions very frequently derive both ornament, strength, and perspicuity, from the adhibition of imagery and allusion: in which he greatly dealt, and as greatly excelled.—I have the satisfaction to find my argument confirmed, by the suffrage of a very respectable commentator, whose learning no man I believe, who has any learning himself, will venture to contest. He observes, that "the word טופס, which is the same with τυπος here, is used by the Jewish writers, for a form, copy, or exemplar, of

which thou hast heard of me *: where the ὑποτυπωσις, ὑγιαινοντων λογων, i. e. the copy, pattern, or outline of sound doctrines, mentioned by the apostle, strongly seems to refer to some elementary sketch, or summary of principles, previously given to Timothy, as a rule by which to proceed, in the doctrines he should publicly deliver as a preacher. So very far are, what have been since called, creeds and articles of faith, from being contrary, as such, either to the letter, or to the spirit of the gospel.

The expedience, propriety, and even necessity of these appear, among other considerations, from hence; that, without some given model, or determinate plan of doctrine, deduced from the sacred scriptures, it will be impossible, either for ministers or people, to form just and connected ideas of divine things. Unless the pearls, which are scattered at large in the gospel-field, be marshalled into some kind of order, and reduced in a regular chain, we can never preach, as the apostle directs, according to the analogy of the faith †: i. e. in exact agreement with that nice connection and mutual relation, which the several doctrines of faith have in common with each other; so as to make of the whole, one

any sort of writings." Dr. Gill, on Rom. vi. 17. Every one knows that even our common Lexicons interpret τυπος by Formula, Norma, Institutum. Scapula particularly intimates, that τυπος sometimes signifies a compendium; for which he cites that passage of Aristotle, τυπῳ τ' αληθες ενδεικνυσθαι, and this of Theophrast, εν τυπῳ και ἁπλως ειπειν.—I should extend this note beyond all reasonable bounds, were I to pursue the argument further. I shall therefore only add, that the very particular notice, which the author of the Confessional has condescended to take of me, for some pages together in the last edition of his celebrated work; above all, the charge of flagrant inconsistency with myself, in my defence of subscription to fixed formularies; have brought me pretty deeply into this writer's debt; and, if my many avocations will give me leave, I design to embrace the first opportunity of coolly and respectfully balancing accounts with this able combatant of creeds, whose talents I revere, at the same time that I deplore their mis-application.

* 2 Tim. i. 13. † Rom. xii. 6.

consistent, uniform, unclashing system: like an instrument of music, in perfect tune, without one discordant string; or, like a consummate picture, wherein every stroke is correlative, and symmetry and just proportion reign throughout. Such is the picture of Christianity, drawn by St. Paul, in the verse before us. A miniature piece, indeed it is; but the design is happy, and the finishing masterly. The first sentence may stand as a motto to the whole: Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. More literally, the mystery of religion is confessedly great. Where by godliness, or religion, are evidently meant, the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity; and, by mystery, the obscurity, or incomprehensibility, with which those truths are more or less attended, during man's present benighted state below. I explain the term mysterious, by incomprehensible: because, properly speaking, the mysteriousness of divine objects does not so much arise from the nature of the objects themselves, as from our inability to comprehend them. The darkness is in us, not in them. It is the imperfection of human reason, both as to light, capacity, and strength, which gives birth to the mysteries. Thus many things, unfathomable by men, are self-evident to angels: and things still more obscure, in whose contemplation even angels would lose their depth, are to God, clearer than meridian day.

In direct opposition both to scripture and common sense, there are writers, who make no scruple to assert roundly, that Christianity is not mysterious; and that, "whatever doctrines are involved in mystery, ought for that very reason, to be rejected as false." If we admit this, we must, to be consistently complaisant, renounce our senses, as well as our faith, and throw philosophy into the same grave with Christianity. For, are not the mysteries of nature, no less than those of grace,

confessedly great? Did that philosopher ever live, who knew the real texture, and could explain all the properties, even of a single atom that floats in the air, or a particle of sand upon the sea-shore? And yet, to deny the existence of these bodies, merely because we know not what they are, nor how they exist, were madness outright. Every object that surrounds us, even those with which we are experimentally conversant, defeat our most laboured researches, and laugh our penetration to scorn. If, then, there is more comprised in the most inferior and familiar instances of divine wisdom, than perhaps philosophy will be able to elucidate while the world remains; why should we start at being told from scripture, that great is the mystery of godliness? Surely, reason itself will acknowledge, that so far from not being mysterious at all, things spiritual and heavenly must, from the transcendent superiority of their very nature, be abundantly more mysterious than the objects of sense. The higher we go, the stronger this observation binds. In the scale of beings, the farther our contemplation ascends, the more must our difficulty of comprehension increase. Matter, both in itself and in its various modifications, is inexplicably mysterious; the nature of spirit, whether human or angelic, is more mysterious still; and God, the infinite, uncreated spirit, is most mysterious of all *.

If the fashionable maxim be true, that "our faith should go no farther than the clearness of our ideas:" i. e. in other words, if all mysteries are to be cashiered and expunged without mercy; we have

* "Some of Epictetus' scholars observed to that philosopher, that he had told them many excellent things concerning God; but that still they could not comprehend his nature. To this the admirable stoic is said to have answered, Si omninò ego Deum declararem, vel ego Deus essem, vel ille Deus non foret: i. e. were I able fully to set forth God, I must either be God myself, or God himself must cease to be so." See Arrowsmith's Chain of Pr. p. 181.

nothing to do but to commence infidels and madmen at once. We must, by parity of argument, deny the existence of every object whatever, in the whole compass of nature; because there is not a single object which we perfectly understand. We must deny the being of a Deity, because our reason is at a loss to explain his essence and manner of operation. We must deny our own existence, because we are ignorant both of the particles whereof our bodies are composed, and of the nature of that soul by which the human body is actuated. In short, resolve to believe no mysteries, and you virtually resolve to believe nothing at all: for every thing is mysterious, in a greater or less degree, from the highest arch-angel, down to the most imperceptible animalcule; and from the sun in the firmament, down to the minutest particle of matter. The very terms, which philosophy is forced to make use of, prove the scantiness of that rational cordage, which, unable to sound a drop of common water, would madly presume to fathom infinity. What, for instance, is attraction? What is repulsion? names for certain effects, of whose real causes we are, in the main, as utterly ignorant, as the boy that holds the plough, or as the peasant that directs the team.

In the front of religious mysteries, St. Paul places the miraculous and supernatural incarnation of Jesus Christ. "God was manifested in the flesh:" God the Son, who, in the covenant of redemption, had taken upon him to deliver man, became man, to accomplish that deliverance. The truth of his divinity is demonstrable from the whole current of scripture; and the truth of his human nature, or the reality of his manifestation in the flesh, is evident, from his having been liable, in general, to the sinless infirmities incident to men. He slept; he shed tears; he experienced hunger, thirst, and weariness; he was acquainted with pain of body, and distress of

mind. In one respect indeed, he seems to have been exempted from the common lot of other human beings; we no where find, to the best of my remembrance, that he ever so much as once experienced any attack of sickness or disease *. The reason of this extraordinary circumstance was, no doubt, owing to the sinless formation of his humanity, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost. Sin was that which introduced every kind of αταξια into the human system; and disease among the rest. But the man Christ Jesus was formed and conceived totally without stain. Hence he was, like our first parents before the fall, naturally immortal; nor could he have died, had he not, by an act of gracious susception, taken the guilt of men upon himself, and become responsible to divine justice for the utmost payment of their penal debt. And, even under those circumstances, we read, that his death, though violent, was voluntary. His resignation of life is constantly represented in scripture, as his own act and deed. For, exclusively of his union with the second person in the godhead; his absolute freedom from sin would of itself have been a certain security from the possibility of dying. Hence, the evangelists express themselves thus; αφηκε το πνευμα, he dismissed, or let go his spirit, Matthew xxvii. 50. παρεδωκε το πνευμα, he resigned, delivered up, or made a surrender of his spirit, John xix. 30. St. Mark's and St. Luke's εξεπνευσε, taken in connection with John x. 18. evidently carries the same import.

As Christ was manifested in the flesh, so was he justified in the spirit: not only justified as to the divinity of his person and mission, and proved to be the Son of God by the miracles which he wrought in conjunction† with the holy Spirit; but likewise

* It is indeed declared, that himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses, Matth. viii. 17. Meaning, I suppose, the sins of his people; those moral sicknesses, which himself bore away in his own body on the tree.

† Luke xi. 20.

spiritually justified by God the Father, from all those sins, which, as the dying surety of his people, he had taken upon himself to expiate. He was thus spiritually or mystically justified, and received his open discharge, as a sin bearing and sin atoning Saviour, when he was raised from the dead, and released from the prison of the tomb; when the Sun of righteousness emerged from his sad, but short eclipse; and rose to set no more.

He was, moreover, seen of angels; seen, with joy and adoration, by the angels that never fell; seen, with envy and dismay, and acknowledged with reluctance, by the apostate spirits who kept not their first estate. The apostle adds, that he was preached unto the Gentiles: preached under his twofold character of God and Mediator; preached as the only sacrifice for sin, and as the everlasting righteousness of believing sinners; preached by all his faithful ministers in every age, as well under the legal, as under the gospel dispensation. And he will still be preached to the end of time, as long as there is one elect sinner uncalled, and until all the vessels of mercy are brought to the saving knowledge and love of himself.

In consequence of being thus preached unto the Gentiles, he is, and will continue to be, believed on in the world. The holy Spirit makes, and will persist to make, the preaching of Christ crucified, the grand channel of his converting power. Pharisees, convinced of sin, shall be dislodged from reliance of their own works, and seek to Jesus for righteousness and strength. Hell deserving offenders, who once saw no comeliness in Christ, but perhaps blasphemed his name, despised his cross, and trod all his commandments under their feet; pierced with the keen, but salutary arrow of penitential anguish, and melted down by effectual grace; shall look for salvation to him whom they have pierced, and mourn in the bitterness of their souls, as one that mourneth

for his first-born. All his people throughout the world shall believe in him: some with an assured, some with a faltering faith; but they shall all believe: just as, when the Israelites were wounded by the flying serpents in the wilderness, some looked, to the brazen image, stedfastly; others feebly; some had a full, near, and distinct view of the elevated remedy, others had a distant, imperfect, confused sight of it; and many, perhaps, could but just raise their eyes toward the object, and hardly caught a glimpse of it: yet they all looked, after some rate or other; and all who did, were healed. So all the people of Christ reach forward towards his righteousness; some with a strong, some with a trembling hand, but they shall all grasp at it, and all utter this prayer (a prayer, which was never, nor ever can be breathed from a graceless heart), O let me be found in thee, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith! They, who thus believe, are careful to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, in all things.

The holy Spirit gives faith; from faith, springs holiness; and the end of both is everlasting life. The entire mystic body of Christ, the whole election of grace, shall, like their triumphant Lord, when their warfare is accomplished, be received up into glory.

But what I chiefly intend at present, is to consider that particular clause of this verse, which asserts, that Jesus was seen of angels.

By the angels here mentioned, we are chiefly to understand the elect * angels; who, being ordained to glory, were immutably confirmed in holiness, nor revolted from the dignity and blessedness in which they were created. These saw the Son of God, long before his incarnation. They beheld

* 1 Tim. v. 21.

him in the fulness of his infinite and essential glory, which he had with the Father and the Holy Ghost, before all worlds.—It is probable, from scripture, that angels were the first fruits of God's creating power, and called into existence, before any thing else was made: and it is certain, from scripture, that the second person of the Trinity, afterwards manifested in the flesh, was the Creator of all the angelic hosts. Hence it follows, that he was seen of them immediately upon their creation: they were no sooner summoned into being than they saw him, and adored. As angels were his first workmanship, their bliss began with the sight of him, and their first employ was praise. Thus they saw him, thus they loved, and thus they worshipped; until the fulness of time was come, when the Ancient of Days became an Infant of Days, and God the Son was found in fashion as a man. When that blessed person entered on his state of actual humiliation, angels viewed, and wondered: wondered to see the object of their adoration made, for a time, lower than themselves*. They beheld him, at Bethlehem, a babe, wrapt in swathes,

> "*When his birth-place was a stable,*
> *And his softest bed was hay*†."

Though surrounding cattle were the chief attendants on the Infant Messiah and his virgin-mother; though, in all outward appearance, the new-born Saviour was, from the very moment of his nativity, forsaken, despised, and rejected of men; he was still seen and revered of angels. The church of the redeemed bowed the knee, and unfallen spirits sung, in that ignominious place, where horses fed, and oxen lowed. The presence of God

* Heb. ii. 7. Βραχυ τι, either for a very short while, or in a very small degree.——It is properly spoken of men, indefinitely; but held strictly true, even as accommodated to Christ himself.

† Dr. Watts.

Incarnate consecrated the stable into a temple of glory; and ennobled the manger, where he slumbered, into a throne of grace.—Such did that humble residence appear, in the eyes of those exalted beings, who, like him that made them, see not as man seeth.

If we trace the adorable Mediator, from infancy, to a state of youth, we shall find him busied in following the occupation of Joseph, his reputed father. It is recorded in the gospel *, that the Jews said, concerning him, Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?

Thus, he who laid the foundations of the earth, and by his excellent wisdom, made the heavens; he who shakes the system he hath made, and the pillars thereof tremble; who speaketh to the sun, and it shineth not, and sealeth up the stars, even he disdained not to fix a mark of honour upon honest industry, by earning his own livelihood, at Nazareth, as soon as his age would permit. There and then was he seen of angels. They saw him laboriously employed, and literally experiencing the truth of the penal edict, denounced soon after the fall, that in the sweat of his brow man should eat bread.—We do not, indeed, find that Christ wrought with his hands after he commenced a preacher. Which observable change of conduct was designed, perhaps, to teach us, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel; and detaching themselves from every unnecessary avocation, devote their time and abilities, as far as possible, to the duties of their high calling.

Though the blessed Jesus was conceived and born without original sin; though he, moreover, lived perfectly exempt from the remotest shadow of actual transgression; still he vouchsafed to stamp the highest authority on the laver of typical regene-

* Mark vi. 3.

ration, by his own personal submission to the ordinance of baptism. He would not enter on the exercise of his holy ministry, until he had been, solemnly and openly, devoted to the visible service of God.—Might he not, likewise, have another and still superior view, in his condescending susception of this sacred right? Washing seems, necessarily, to carry with it the idea of previous defilement. Whoever is brought to the baptismal font, is brought thither as a sinner. And the whole ceremony is a solemn recognition of human guilt, as well as strikingly emblematical of the way and manner in which pardon and sanctification are attained; even by the effusion of the Messiah's blood, and the hallowing agency of his blessed Spirit. Now, if baptism be confessedly an acknowledgment of human sinfulness, how came he to divide the waves of Jordan, who was infinitely holy as God, and immaculately righteous, as man? Probably, because he was made sin for us*. In a way of imputation, the Lord laid on him the iniquity of all his people†. And Jesus was not ashamed, publicly to avow the merciful office he had assumed. Hence, though absolutely sinless, he was baptized as a sinner. And this practical declaration of his atoning character, was a part of that exterior righteousness, which, as the victim and substitute of his saints, it became him to fulfil‡.—On this great occasion, we read, that the heavens were opened. We are not, indeed, expressly told, that he was seen of angels; though no doubt he was. The reason, perhaps, why the mention of that circumstance was omitted by the evangelists, might be, because personages of dignity infinitely superior to that of angels, constituted and crowned the grandeur of the scene. The everlasting Father and the uncreated Spirit gave sensible manifestations of their immediate presence;

* 2 Cor. v. 21. † Isaiah liii. 6. ‡ Matth. iii. 15.

while the co-equal Son, under the likeness of sinful flesh, parted the mystic stream.——Angels, who just before, admired to see the blameless Immanuel baptized; suddenly, exchanged their admiration for adoring awe, and wrapt their prostrate faces in their wings, when the Father Almighty deigned, audibly, to testify his complacency in the person and priesthood of his incarnate Son; and the co-eternal Spirit bowed the heavens and came down, not in the form, but (ὡσει περιστεραν) after the manner of a dove: with a gentle, gradual, hovering descent. Well might angels be thrown, as it were, into shades, by the silence of the sacred historians. For, what are angels, when compared with God! evanid stars, eclipsed and lost, amidst the boundless, overwhelming blaze of day.

Shortly after, he was seen of angels, when assailed in the wilderness, by the enemy of God and man. They stood by, not to give the Messiah their assistance, for he needed none; but simply, as spectators of his conflict, and witnesses of his conquest. As they had formerly seen Paradise lost, by the yielding frailty of Adam; so they now beheld Paradise regained, by the unrelaxing firmness of Jesus Christ the righteous. After he had fought the good fight, and had actually foiled the tempter, we read that angels ministered unto him: but not before.

"Temptation," says an useful writer*, "is the fire that brings up the scum of the heart. The corrupt heart resembles an ant's nest, on which, while the stone lieth, none of them appear; but, take off that, and stir them only with the point of a straw, what a swarm is there, and how lively they are! Just such a sight, O man, would thy heart afford thee, did the Lord but withdraw the restraint he has laid upon it, and suffer satan to stir it up by temptation." Such is the heart of man: but not

* Mr. Boston, in his Fourfold State of Human Nature.

such was the heart of Christ. Though he was tempted in all points, tempted even to idolatry and self-murder, yet was he totally without sin *. He came forth brighter, but not purer, from the furnace; brighter, because his graces were rendered more conspicuous by the fiery trial; but not purer, because he had no moral dross to lose. When satan tempted Christ, it was like striking fire upon ice, or upon a wave of the sea: there was nothing in his sinless nature for the sparks to lay hold on; but every thing that could resist and quench them. All the adversary's efforts on the Messiah's integrity, were like arrows shot at the firmament: or, as an excellent person † expresses it, resembled "The motions of a serpent on a rock; where they can make no impression, nor leave the least dent or trace behind them.—But on us, they are as the trailings of a serpent on sand or dust: they make a print, and leave some stain on the imagination at least, if not on the heart." In every assault therefore, which we are called to sustain, may we look for safety and for strength, to the Captain of our salvation, who, in his own person, bruised the serpent's head, and is able to succour them that are tempted. And remember, O assaulted Christian, to thy unspeakable comfort, that thou shalt in the end, be more than conqueror through him that hath loved thee. As thy Saviour was seen of angels, when he quenched the fiery darts of the wicked one; so art thou seen of thy Saviour, under all thy conflicts and distresses: nor seen only, but supported and embraced; and because he overcame, thou shalt overcome also.—A famous Dutch admiral ‡, in the morning of that day on which he fell, is reported to have said, "This day, I shall be crowned either with laurels, or with cypress:" intimating, his determined resolution, either to gain the victory, or to

* Matth. iv. 6. 9. Heb. iv. 15. † Gurnall's Christian Armor, vol. i. p. 98. ‡ Van Trump.

lose his life. And his life he accordingly lost. A musket ball, from the English fleet, crowned with cypress one of the ablest sea-officers that ever fought. But it is the peculiar happiness of the Christian warrior, to know assuredly, from God's inviolable promise, that no weapon formed against the heirs of salvation, shall finally prosper or prevail. Whoever is, by saving grace, enlisted under the banner of the cross, may be certain before he fights, that he shall be crowned, not with cypress, but with laurels. Prior to his striking a single blow, he is insured, both as to safety and conquest, by that Omnipotent Being, whose never failing providence, as our church admirably expresses it, orders all things both in heaven and earth *.

When the Son of God commenced a minister of the gospel, and delivered to high and low, in season and out of season, the message of salvation, he was seen and heard of angels. On some occasions, they saw the heavenly preacher weep over his unfeeling auditories; and, on all occasions, heard him declare the counsel of God, as never man spake until then. Those mysteries of grace, which, at this very day, angels desire to look deeper into, they learned from his blessed lips: and bending seraphs derived sublime instruction from those matchless discourses which obdurate men despised.——How beautiful, upon the mountains were the feet, i. e. the zeal

* If so, an Arminian may object, if we are certain, beforehand, of overcoming, farewell to all diligence of our own: we may unbuckle our armour, and sit down without fighting at all. This cavil refutes itself. How can the assurance of final victory, supersede the necessity of contending, when fighting is the only possible means by which victory can be gained? History, both sacred and profane, affords almost innumerable instances, that even a strong probability of conquest inspires an army with impetus and vigour, next to invincible. Much more would an infallible certainty of success, embolden even the diffident, stimulate the indolent, and animate the courageous with redoubled ardour.——How then, is it possible, that, in the spiritual warfare, certainty of conquest should either depress the timid, or emasculate the strong?

and the labours of him who brought good tidings, and published peace * between God and sinners! Himself the peace-maker and the peace-revealer! how often did he, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, consecrate the mountains of Judea, by his own personal ministrations; and cause the hills of the earthly Canaan to echo with the sweetest notes of salvation by grace; while streams and rocks, responsive, reverberated the joyful sound! Elect angels, hovering in mid air, were his invisible disciples; and elect sinners, converted by his efficacious call, were the visible seals of his ministry.—O might the present preachers of the word catch a ray of his celestial ardour, adopt his indefatigable zeal, and imbibe the spirit of his love! Happy they, who are enabled to imitate the great shepherd and bishop of souls! and oh, that more of these were sent forth into the harvest! Yet why do I wish for more? The sovereign master of the vineyard best knows what he has to do. God hath, in every age, raised up a number of evangelical ministers, sufficient to answer his purposes of grace. Divine wisdom, no doubt proportions the number of gospel-labourers, to the extent of the spiritual harvest he means to gather in. God's elect people may be more, or fewer, in one generation than another: and hence at different periods, Christian preachers multiply or decrease †: just as a skilful husbandman lessens or enlarges the number of his reapers, according to the quantity of corn he has to cut. If twenty are sufficient for the harvest, he will not employ fifty; if an hundred be requisite, an hundred will be sent forth.

In his secret approaches to God, was Jesus seen of angels. They beheld, they more than beheld,—they felt, when, with strong cries and tears, he poured out his soul in private prayer. Unem-

* Isaiah lii. 7. † Psalm lxvii. 11.

bodied spirits, with admiring sympathy, thronged his devout retirements: and though they ever burned with zeal for God, yet they caught additional fervour from the agonizing petitions of their Incarnate Creator. They lighted their taper at his hallowed fire. Listening angels grew more angelic; and seraphs flew back to heaven more seraphic than they came.

When every eye, except his own, was closed in sleep, oft would he withdraw to some desolate mountain, or unfrequented field, and spend whole nights in communion with God. Like the solitary, but melodious nightingale, he retreated from the scenes of hurry and observation, to send up the heavenly breathings of his inmost soul, in undiverted supplications and unmolested praise. At these seasons it was, that, as Dr. Watts finely sings,

> *Cold mountains and the midnight air*
> *Witnessed the fervour of his pray'r.*

But, though unseen of men, the praying Messiah was seen of angels, and seen of God. Not a sigh that heaved the Mediator's breast, nor a groan he uttered, nor a petition he advanced, but was noticed, accepted, and recorded in heaven: and shall have its full effect, in the glory of his Father, and the salvation of all his people.

Oh, how unlike the prayers of Christ are the frozen, careless, languid, wandering, unfelt devotions of those on earth, who call themselves his disciples! May he pour down upon us the spirit of grace and of supplication. Then shall we feel the importance of divine things, as he felt them. We shall walk, in some measure, as Jesus walked; and pray, as Jesus prayed.

On the mount of transfiguration, prior to his last sufferings, was he likewise seen of angels. At humble distance they heard him speak with the glorified soul of Moses and the glorified person of Elijah, con-

cerning his own decease which he was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem *. As in the sinless obedience of his life, he had perfectly fulfilled the law, for the justification of his mystic body, the church; so by his propitiatory death, he was to fulfil the prophecies of old, and make atonement for the sins of the people before the Lord. Moses, therefore, by whom the law had been given; and Elijah, as representative of the prophets; left for a while, their thrones in glory, to bear witness once more, to the Messiahship of Jesus. On this occasion, angels saw his human nature brighten into glory superior to theirs. An earnest and a foretaste of the majesty with which he should be invested, when his sufferings (then just at hand) should be accomplished: and of the glory which the bodies of his saints shall wear, when the trump of God shall sound, and the resurrection of the just take place.

Let not believers, like the mistaken disciples who accompanied their Lord at the time of his transfiguration, think to set up tabernacles of abode on the mount of divine communion. Jesus himself came down from the mount; and was soon after, seen of angels in the valley of Gethsemane.

On that sad, that solemn night, when he was sold and delivered into the hands of sinful men, he retired, for the last time before he suffered, into the garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives. That garden, to which he had oft times resorted, both alone, and with his disciples, for the purposes of secret prayer, and religious conversation. That garden, in which he had enjoyed so many delightful seasons of fellowship with God. That garden, every spot, perhaps, of whose distinguished ground had been consecrated by the footsteps of a meditating, and the knees of an adoring Saviour. Yet here, alas, were his dying sorrows to begin. Angels, who

* Luke ix. 31.

had, just before, seen him institute and celebrate the mystic supper, attended him in his last retreat to this once delightful, but now tremendous place. Well might a good man say, "All places are happy, or miserable, in proportion as God vouchsafes or denies his gracious presence therein." In Gethsemane, where Jesus had so often experienced the ravishing consolations of his heavenly Father's countenance; in this very Gethsemane, must the same blessed Jesus experience the first outpourings of his Almighty Father's wrath. Here it was, that his righteous soul became exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Here it was, that the spotless victim began to feel the dreadful weight of imputed guilt, and the terrors of avenging justice.—When his inward agony forced his very blood from its veins, which even made its way through his three-fold vesture, and fell * clotted

* Luke xxii. 44. And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground: meaning, as it should seem, that the agony our Lord was in, forced, at once, his blood from its finer vessels, and the sweat from all his pores; which (the sweat and the blood) mingling in their fall, were by the extreme coldness and rigour of the weather, condensed and frozen into solid clots, before they reached the ground. The word ὡσει, rendered as it were, does not, I apprehend, import that real blood did not actually transude from his body; but that it was not blood alone. Add to this, that, as Bengelius well observes, ὡσει relates, not to ἱδρῶτα but to θρόμβοι καταβαίνοντες; and implies, as another learned foreigner observes, that, his sweat was so mixed and discoloured with the concomitant blood, as to resemble, in its united appearance, mere blood only.—Luke de Bruges, the critic last referred to, has a very valuable note on the passage: Illud, quasi, non significat, hunc non fuisse verum sanguinem, sed non fuisse verè guttas sanguinis, sed guttas aqueas mixtas sanguine; quod etiam fieri possit per naturam vim intus patientem, ac proinde per poras ejicientem unà cum acquâ sanguinem: præsertim ubi corpus est rarum ac aeticatum, et sanguis subtilis, ut in Christo indubié erat.

The note of Bengelius is equally judicious: Θρόμβοι Grumi, à θρέψαι, i. e. πῆξαι.—Θρόμβοι αἱματος, guttæ spissæ et concretæ veri sanguinis. Vis particulæ ὡσει cadit super θρόμβοι, non su er αἱματος, ut patet ex epitheto, ejusque plurali, καταβαίνοντες. Sanguis per minores guttulas è poris manans, concrescebat propter copiam. Si sudor non fuisset sanguineus, mentio sanguinis planè abesse poterat: nam vocabulum θρόμβοι etiam per se competebat sudori spisso.

to the ground; when himself lay prostrate on the earth with his garments literally rolled in blood; when, as the surety of the covenant, and as the substitute of his people, he bore the sins and carried the sorrows of the whole believing world; when, with the names of his mystic Israel upon his heart, our Great High Priest, Jesus, the Son and the Lamb of God, sustained intensively, that punishment for sin, which must otherwise have been levied, extensively, on sinners, to all eternity: when he cried, in the bitterness of his soul, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;——he was seen, he was heard, he was deplored of angels. They joined with the agonizing petitioner. They united their supplications with his: and the prayers of angels went up, for once, through the hands of a Mediator.

But it was not possible for the cup to pass from him. The decree must be accomplished. The covenant of grace must be fulfilled. God's people must be saved. The Saviour, therefore, must die. Himself was sensible of this. Hence, though as man, his anguish induced him to wish that, if possible, he might drink no deeper of the penal cup; yet, as party to the covenant of redemption, he, in the same breath, consents to drink the dregs and wring them out: adding, Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done; if sinners can be saved, and thy Son not die, let thy Son be spared; but if otherwise, if my people must perish, or thy Son be slain, O save my people and slay thy Son.—Alternate grief, and wonder, heaved the celestial bosoms of attending angels: grief, at the sufferings he endured; wonder, at his magnanimity of love to man; love, which the many waters of divine indignation could not quench, nor all the floods of horror and anguish drown.

Angels saw him receive the insidious kiss, by which he was betrayed. They saw him arraigned at

the bar of the very men, who were indebted for their creation to the word of his power; and who owed the stations they bore, to the disposals of his providence. Angels heard, and shuddered at the sentence, by which he was condemned to die. They saw him mocked, and struck, and clothed with insulting scarlet. He was seen of angels, when he deigned to wear a crown of thorns. They beheld, and if angels can weep, they wept, when he was tied to the ignominious pillar, and scourged with rods of knotted wire; when, according to the prediction of the royal prophet, The ploughers ploughed upon his back, and made long furrows.

Angels saw, and astonishment was in heaven, when he hid not his face from shame and spitting. They saw, when, through the extremity of grief and torture, his beauty consumed away, like as it were a moth fretting a garment: when he could say, Thy rebuke hath broken my heart; I am full of heaviness; I looked for some to take pity on me, but there was none; neither found I any to comfort me. The man Christ Jesus, being formed without sin, and by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, was doubtless, transcendently fair, and augustly beautiful. Hence his human nature was compared to the temple: a structure eminently holy, and peculiarly elegant. Prior to his sufferings, he was, literally, fairer than the children of men. It was not, till his blessed person had been disfigured with wounds, and emaciated with grief; until his face was foul with weeping, and on his eyelids sat the shadow of death; that he is said to have had neither form nor comeliness; but that his face was marred more than any man's, and his countenance than the sons of men.

Angels thronged around the majestic sufferer, when he was led forth to crucifixion, as a lamb to the slaughter. They saw him nailed to the

instrument of death, after he had fainted beneath its weight. And, had I an angel's tongue, I should find it impossible to tell what angels felt, when they heard him groan, from the deepest recesses of his agonizing heart, that exclamation of overwhelming woe;—My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?—Forsaken, cried the deserted Saviour. Angels caught the dismal accents. Forsaken, forsaken, the sad and astonished choir replied.

Surely, all heaven was, at that dreadful moment, emptied of its inhabitants. Surely, not angels only, but the spirits likewise of just men made perfect (who had been saved on the credit of that great sacrifice which was now offering up), started from their thrones, and dropt their crowns; quitted, for a while, the abodes of bliss, and, with pensive admiration and drooping wings, hovered round the cross of their departing Lord. If ever sorrow was in heaven; if ever the harps of the blessed were suspended, silent, and unstrung on the willows of dismay; if ever angels ceased to praise, and glorified souls forgot to sing; if ever the harmony of the sky was, not merely interrupted, but, if it be possible, exchanged for lamentation and mourning and woe:—it must have been during the six tremendous hours (such hours as nature never saw before, nor will ever see again), that the dying Jesus hung upon the tree.

Having, amidst all his personal agonies, detained himself on earth, until he had looked a dying blasphemer into repentance; and until he had made provision for the maintenance of his widowed mother (who stood, weeping and adoring, at the foot of his cross) by committing her to the care and guardianship of his best beloved disciple; he cried, with a loud triumphant voice, It is finished: "I have suffered enough. The types and the prophecies are accomplished. My covenant engag-

ments are fulfilled. The debts of my people are paid. I have finished transgression; I have made an end of sin; I have wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness. The law is magnified. Justice is satisfied. My warfare is over. My conflicts are past." His spiritual desertions were now superseded. The light of God's countenance gave the expiring Mediator the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The Sun of righteousness goes down without a cloud. He departs in peace, with those comfortable words of filial confidence on his lips, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Words that pierced the earth to her centre, and shook her in her orbit; cleft the ponderous rocks; rended the vail of the temple, and exposed its sacred, but now superseded arcana, to common view; unlocked the abodes of death; and threw open the graves of many a departed saint, who, probably (as did their triumphant Lord shortly after) rose to die no more, but ascended, in their respective bodies, with him, when he went up from the Mount of Olives.———I have already observed, that Christ continued alive on the cross, for the space of six hours. During the last three, there was darkness over all the earth. The sun hid his beams. The dreadful transaction on Mount Calvary

"*drove back his chariot. Midnight veil'd the world:*
"*A midnight, nature shudder'd to behold.*"

Why was the earth darkened? not only to demonstrate the dignity of him that bled, but, perhaps to shadow forth that still more deep and dismal darkness, which the soul of the Messiah was then experiencing, under the awful withdrawings of his Father's countenance. When his Father's sensible presence returned, and Jesus, with his dying breath,

declared his sufferings fulfilled, light revisited the earth, and the sufferer was received into glory. Joy was again in heaven (never to be absent more); when the human soul of Christ ascended from the cross. With what eclats of admiring transport was he seen of angels, when he rode on cherubs and did fly, and went up to his throne as on the wings of the wind!

# SERMON III.

## JESUS SEEN OF ANGELS.

### PART II.

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF BROAD HEMBURY, DEVON;

DECEMBER 25th, 1770.

Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.—1 JOHN iv. 10.

# SERMON III.

1 Tim. iii. 16.

———*Seen of Angels.*———

One grateful and pious office was yet to be performed. The precious remains of Christ must be released from the cross, and consigned to the sepulchre. A virgin-tomb, wherein no person had ever been deposited, is to receive the sinless offspring of a virgin-parent. Think not that his disconsolate mother, and his favourite disciple John, together with Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, the converted rabbi;—think not that these were the only mourners, who waited on the breathless Jesus to the place of interment. As his triumphant spirit, on its emersion from the body, had been convoyed to heaven by a detachment of angelic beings; so, without a doubt, a *guard du corps* was left below, who forsook not their station at the cross, until the temple of his body was taken down. These joined invisibly, the tender solicitude of those holy persons, who payed (as they imagined) their last tribute of love to the departed Messiah. His obsequies were celebrated by angels, and by men; who saw the Lord of life and glory counted with them that go down into the pit; free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, who are remembered no more, but are cut off by God's hand; when he was laid in the lowest pit; in a place of darkness, and in

the deep *. While the few, the very few believers, who had the courage to follow his loved remains to their bed of rest, were embalming the Lord with their spices and their tears; angels, though deeply and awfully imprest with the mournful scene, sung, perhaps, this for the funeral anthem, Thou wilt not leave his soul in the state of invisibility and separation; neither wilt thou suffer the body of thine holy one to see corruption †.

He was seen of angels, when he arose on the third auspicious day. An angel of God burst the seal, and rolled away the stone from the entrance of the cavern, and sat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and, for fear of him, the keepers, or Roman guard, consisting of sixty soldiers, did shake, and became as dead men. More than one of the celestial host appeared to the trembling women and the anxious apostles, who came shortly after to visit the place where the Lord lay. As angels had been the annunciators of his birth, angels were the first preachers of his resurrection. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here: he is risen.

Forty days were the space that intervened, between the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ. This memorable interval he devoted to the comfort, instruction, and confirmation of his disciples. If the general appear to be slain, it is usual for his soldiers to fly. But, when he shows himself alive, his rallying troops forget their panic, and return to their deserted banners. Such was the conduct of the apostles. They threw down their shields and fled, when the captain of their salvation fell; they resumed their arms, and flocked again to his person, when the prince of life revived. In flying, they showed what the best are, if left to their own

* Psalm lxxxviii. † Psalm xvi.

strength and faithfulness: In returning, they were erected by recovering grace, into endless monuments of the certainty of that declaration (a declaration which holds as true of every individual believer, as it did of the elect apostles), Those whom thou hast given me, to save and redeem, I have kept: and [οὐδείς] not one of them is, or can, finally, be lost.—The sacred history informs us, that, prior to his ascension, Jesus conversed with his disciples, on the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.—On the fortieth day from his resurrection, leading them to the Mount of Olives (it should seem to that particular part of the Mount which immediately overlooked the village of Bethany), he took his last farewel, on earth, of those who were to see him no more on this side glory.—A wise and tender parent, when about to travel into a far country, takes care to leave his remaining family in the charge of such hands as he can safely trust. Nor would the Shepherd of Israel ascend from his flock below, until he had revived them with the assurance of their soon receiving such a plenitude of the Holy Ghost, and of power from on high, as they had never yet experienced. Very lately, they had given dismal proof, in their own personal conduct, of the exceeding low ebb to which the exercise of inherent grace may be reduced, without the special presence and guidance of God the holy Spirit. Christ therefore promises them the future security of his effectual influence; Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence; and ye shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth. And now the great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is for passing into the heavens. Having glorified his Father on the earth, and finished the work of his people's salvation which had been given him to do; he prepares to be glorified himself, by

participating, in his human nature, as much as it can receive of that glory, which, as a divine person, he had with the Father before the world was. But not until, in quality of king and priest, he has once more solemnly and authoritatively, blessed his apostles and disciples, in his Father's name and in his own. When Elijah was taken up into heaven by the ministry of seraphs (sublimely styled, a chariot and horses of fire), the ascending prophet dropped his mantle on the plaintive Elisha who was left below; with which precious legacy, Elisha smote the waters of Jordan, so that they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over * on dry ground. So the ascending Saviour, Elijah's illustrious antitype, entailed his blessing, and bequeathed his mantle to the children he left behind: the mantle of his righteousness, and the covering of his spirit; wherewith his saints are enabled to smite the waters of affliction, persecution, temptation, and death itself. All which shall cleave in twain, like a scroll that is rolled back, and leave a way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass safely and comfortably over.

This was perhaps the tenor of the blessing wherewith Jesus the man of God, himself both God and man, blessed his mystic Israel, as he mounted to his throne: And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one. Father, I will that these, and they also who shall believe on me through their word, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me: for they are thine.

* 2 Kings ii.

And it came to pass, that while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and was carried up into heaven *: Giving it may be, as he soared, this parting benediction to his church collective, The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, Numb. vi. 24. 26. Thus did he put his name upon the people of his love, and blessed them.

But where were the angels all this while? were they unactive, on so distinguished an occasion? Surely, no. He was seen of them, he was praised and waited on by them, when he ascended up on high and led captivity captive. All heaven was in concert above; and all the peopled air was harmony, as he ascended through. Some of the cherubic hosts were dispatched as heralds; making proclamation, as they flew, Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in.—Who is this king of glory, chaunted others of the extatic legions? —The Lord, Jehovah in human nature, strong and mighty to save; the Lord, mighty in battle, the conqueror of sin and death and hell, returning triumphant from his successful warfare; the Lord of hosts, creator of us angels, and the ransomer of the nations of them that are saved; he is the king of glory †. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? He of whom alone it could be said, that he had clean hands and a pure heart ‡: in his nature, totally sinless; and, in his life, the perfect fulfiller of all righteousness.—Thus did God go up with a shout, and the Lord with the sound of a trumpet §: attending spirits sang, Rise up Lord, and let thine

* Luke xxiv. 51. Acts i. 9. † Psalm xxiv. 7—10.
‡ Ibid. v. 3, 4. § Psalm xlvii. 5.

enemies be scattered*; while the gazing disciples, responsive from below, cried out, Return, O Lord, now in the power of thy spirit, and hereafter in the brightness of thy personal coming, to the many thousands of Israel! Might it not be said, concerning those highly favoured persons, who were witnesses of his ascension, They have seen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary: the singers went before, the players on instruments followed after†; all the joy of the blessed was in full exercise, all the melody of heaven was at the height, when Jesus was ushered to his throne, and when, as a lamb newly slain, as a God totally victorious, he entered into the holy place for us.

Thus, at sundry times, and in divers manners, was Jesus seen of angels. They also see him now. At this very moment, they are beholding him in glory. Angels, who were never incarnated, view, with wonder, the exalted humanity of him that wept in the manger and hung upon the tree.

"Princes to his imperial name
bend their bright sceptres down;
Dominions, thrones, and pow'rs rejoice
to see him wear the crown:

"Arch-angels sound his lofty praise
thro' ev'ry heav'nly street,
And lay their highest honours down
submissive at his feet:

"Those soft, those blessed feet of his,
which once rude iron tore!
High on a throne of light they stand,
while all the saints adore‡."

* Numb. x. 35, 36. † Psalm lxviii. 24, 25. ‡ Dr. Watts.

Angels shall see him, and augment the splendor of his appearance, when he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire. He will, as himself expresses it, come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, Matth. xxv. 31. The voice of the archangel shall sound, and the trump of God.—One branch of their business will be, to gather together the dust of his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of the heaven, Mark xiii. 27. By their ministry, perhaps the knot of indissoluble union, between the glorified soul and the risen body of each respective believer, may be tied. They perhaps will, when Christ gives the signal, set fire to the world, and regulate that conflagration which shall issue in the new heaven (i. e. a new body of air) and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*. Whether angels will share in the glory of the millenniary state; or, whether that reign will be peculiar to Christ and his redeemed people only, is not I believe, clearly revealed. But this we can make no doubt of, that, when the millennium is over, and the second resurrection (the resurrection of the unjust) has taken place; when sentence shall be past, and the books closed; when the unrighteous are turned into hell, and the elect enter with Christ, into the final enjoyment of glory; angels and saints will for ever see, for ever admire, and love, worship and resemble him that sitteth on the throne.

But, must believers wait until death and glory give them a sight of Christ? No. As he was on earth seen of angels; so, blessed be the riches of his grace, he is even on earth, sometimes seen of men: seen not literally, but with the eye of faith, and in the light of his holy Spirit. When our evidences are clear and bright, when he manifests himself† to the souls of his people, and gladdens them with sweet views of interest in his covenant favour,

* 2 Pet. iii. 7—10—12, 13. † John xiv. 21.

his covenant-righteousness, and covenant-sufferings; when he takes us up with him on the Mount of secret communion, and gives us a glimpse of the good land which is afar off; when he sends the earnest of our inheritance into our hearts, even the Spirit of adoption, causing us to cry, Abba, Father; when he makes us experience the meltings of his presence, and the out-pourings of his love; we may each cry out with the apostle, Have I not seen Christ Jesus the Lord*? Yes, may it be replied, to our great and endless comfort, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth†.

I have seen God face to face, said Jacob.—Mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts, said Isaiah.—I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee, cried holy Job. —This is the will of him who sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life; says he that was dead, and liveth, and is alive for evermore. To see Christ, therefore, is to believe in him, as covenanting in our name, dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. It is what the apostle styles, looking unto Jesus‡, for life and salvation, and throwing ourselves upon him as the author and finisher, the beginner and perfecter of faith and holiness, safety and happiness. Such a sight of Christ will,

1. Make us vile, and keep us low, in our own eyes. Nothing humbles the soul like a spiritual

* 1 Cor. ix. 1. † Acts xxii. 14.

‡ Heb. xii. 2. Αφοραωντες, literally, looking off, looking away from, withdrawing the eye: looking off from every other object; confining our views to him alone; bottoming the whole weight of our confidence, and laying the entire stress of our dependence on his blood and obedience. Looking off above all, from our own works; from our sinful works, in point of discouragement; and from our good works, in point of reliance. This it is to look off and to look away unto Jesus.

view of him who though he was rich, yet for our sakes, became poor, that we through his poverty, might be made rich. How the world lessens, and all its fading honours darken, on the eye of faith! How is self annihilated, how is pride hid from man, under the shinings of the Mediator's majesty and meekness! A believing sight of him is the only source whence evangelic repentance can flow. True repentance (as I once heard an excellent friend observe) is the tear of faith: and as the eye must exist, previously to the tear it sheds; so must faith be wrought in the heart, ere true repentance weeps. When God made a peculiar discovery of himself to the soul of Job, what was its effect on that holy man? I abhor myself, said he, and repent in dust and ashes *. They shall look unto me, whom they have pierced and mourn †, says God: First look, and then mourn; first believe, and then repent. The rock is first smitten, and then the waters flow: the almighty sun of righteousness must point the beams of his converting power upon the soul, and then a gracious melting ensues; the frost breaks, the ice dissolves, and the vanquished sinner, who was sometime afar off, is brought nigh by the blood of Christ. The devout Mr. Henry has, if I remember right, a remark to this effect: "If Christ had not looked upon Peter, Peter had not wept.—Peter's tears flowed first from the eyes of Christ." Grace alone can work repentance unto life. Only the sight of a broken, bleeding Saviour, can give a broken, bleeding heart. When we hear of the death of a stranger, we are seldom very deeply affected; but when we read of the death of a beneficent friend, or of a loving and beloved relation, our relentings are kindled, and our eyes overflow. So the death of Christ makes but a slight impression on the heart, considered merely as an historical event; but when

* Job xlii. 5, 6. † Zech. xii. 10.

the Christian is made to see that it was his everlasting friend who died; and that he died, moreover, for his particular salvation, it is such looking that produces godly sorrow. Jesus need but show himself to a sinner, and the sinner falls before him. Veni, vidi, vici, may be inscribed by the Saviour on every monument of grace, on every converted soul; I came to the sinner, I looked upon him, and with a look of omnipotent love, I overcame him.

2. A sight of Christ will cause us to value, and rest upon his righteousness. Be not deceived, O man. Call not thyself a Christian, think not thyself a believer, if thou dost not depend on the imputed righteousness of Christ, and upon that alone, for justification and acceptance with God. You can never appear before the tremendous Judge of all, in an home-spun suit, in a righteousness of your own weaving. You must be clothed from head to foot, out of God's own wardrobe. You must have the obedience of Jesus Christ, that only wedding garment wherein you can possibly stand with safety, or lift up your head with joy. God the Father must give it you by imputation: God the holy Spirit must apply and put it on you, by grace: and you must wrap it about you by faith. Phil. iii. 9.

Free-will and self-righteousness are the noli nos tangere of almost every unconverted man. As to free-will, he deems it high treason against the dignity of human nature, to have it so much as questioned: and for self-righteousness, he hugs it as a bosom idol. Ministers, with all their toil, can at the utmost, but strike off a few imperceptible grains from this double fortress of unregeneracy. But when the Spirit of God makes an assault in effectual calling, the business is done: a mine is sprung at the very foundations; invincible grace sets fire to the train; and the strong holds are blown up at once. So terrible sometimes, is the explosion, and so alarming are the thunderings and lightnings of the

law; that the new born saint hardly knows, in his first fright, whereabouts he is: the ruins fly so wide, and fall so thick around him, that he finds himself constrained (happy constraint!) to fly to Christ, for shelter from that very self-righteousness, in which he trusted before.—It may, however, be needful to observe, that all God's people do not experience this violence of terror. It is not essential to conversion, though God is pleased to convert some in this manner. Many are led to Christ, by the drawings of his love; others are driven by the terrors of his law. But, whether driven or drawn, happy are they that are caused to approach him! Accomplished either way, regeneration is in itself, one and the same blessing. If you see yourself to be lost, unless you have interest in the atonement and righteousness of Christ; it is plain you have had a sight of Christ himself, to all the purposes of safety.—From the whole, arises a two-fold caution: (1.) Let not those who experience much of the terrors of the Lord, be discouraged. Complain not that your convictions and distress continue so long. The longer you are under the hands of your heavenly Surgeon, the sounder will be your cure at last. (2.) If you have not felt the horrors and agonies of soul, which some others have, do not deem yourself unregenerate, merely on that account. If you feel the impossibility of being saved by the works of the law, or by your own righteousness; and if you desire to be found in Christ alone, to derive all your salvation from his merits, without any mixture of your own goodness, faithfulness, or strength; I dare assert, that you are born of God. Instead, therefore, of calling thy conversion in question, be thankful to God, that he has healed and restored thy soul, without putting thee to that pain in the process, which multitudes of thy fellow believers have experienced.—See but Christ, as the only way of God's salvation, and you

have seen enough to make you safe and holy, humble and happy.

3. A sight of him never fails to be followed by a life and conversation correspondent to the gospel of Christ. As from a view of God's external works, we are sensible of his creating power; so by the inward and outward marks of grace, shining in us and upon us, we may know that he has begun the great work of the new creation within. An evangelical regard to the whole compass of moral duty, is a sign that our profession is genuine: just as we may infer the purity of silver, from the Tower-stamp. This, then, is one note, whereby to distinguish between the precious and the vile. Unbelievers trust in good works, without doing any: the true believer does good works, without trusting in them. These things I will, said the apostle, that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works. "He that hath clothes," says the admirable Mr. Gurnall *, "will surely wear them, and not be seen naked. Men talk of their faith, repentance, and love to God. These are precious graces; but why do not such persons let us see these graces walking abroad in their daily conversation? Surely, if such guests were in thy soul, they would look out at the windows, and be seen, out of doors, in the exercise of holy duties."

Alexander the Great had a soldier in his army, who bore the same name, but was a notorious coward. Either be courageous, said the king to him, or cease to bear the name of Alexander. O professor, either lead a holy life, or cease to call thyself a churchman, cease to call thyself a Christian. —Xenocrates of Chalcedon was one day giving a lecture on philosophy, at Athens. In the midst

* Christian Armour, vol. i. p. 87.

of his dissertation, enters a youth of quality (one of the bucks of that age), named Polemon, just come from a debauch, "high-flown with insolence and wine," and wearing (as the custom then was, on festive occasions) a chaplet of flowers on his head. He no sooner caught the eye of Xenocrates, than the latter immediately turned his discourse to morals; and reasoned with such dignity, propriety, and force, that the young nobleman began to look serious; and seriousness settled him into a fixed attention. As the philosopher proceeded, Polemon felt the risings of remorse; and ere the dissertation was concluded, he was struck with shame and horror at the conscious review of his past conduct. He slid the chaplet from his head, muffled his face in his robe, resolved on a change of manners, and actually became, from that day forward, a pattern of wisdom and virtue. In process of time, he even rose into a philosopher, of no small distinction; and at last succeeded Xenocrates in the care of his pupils.—If the remonstrances of an heathen moralist could have such effect on the heart and life of a professed libertine; how much more will the influence of the holy Spirit teach true believers to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, justly, and religiously in the present world!

4. A sight of Christ will conduce to make our affections heavenly and spiritual. We shall, particularly, resemble Christ in his passive resignation to the will and providence of God *. Accomplish in

* "When the treaty of marriage was on foot between the then prince of Wales (afterwards Charles I.) and the Infanta of Spain, the earl of Bristol, our ambassador at the court of Madrid, was so greatly perplexed, on account of the treaties not going on to his mind, that he lost several night's sleep. A gentleman of his bed-chamber observing his uneasiness, addressed him thus: My lord, you are exceedingly anxious and restless. I beseech you to consider that the world was well governed, for more than 5000 years, before you were born; and it will be as well governed when you are dead. I pray you then, be not troubled at any thing; but refer the issue to God.

me, on me, and by me, all the pleasure of thy goodness; will be our heart's desire and prayer, in proportion as we have seen and believed in him, who came down from heaven not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him.—The most remarkable and astonishing instance of human resignation, I ever remember to have met with, is to be found in the conduct of the exemplary archbishop Fenelon. When his illustrious and hopeful pupil (the duke of Burgundy, if I mistake not) lay dead in his coffin, and the nobles of his court, in all the pomp of silent sadness, stood weeping round, the archbishop came into the apartment; and, having fixed his eyes for some time, on the corpse; broke out at length, in terms to this effect: "There lies my beloved prince, for whom my affection was equal to the tenderest regard of the tenderest parent. Nor was my affection lost: he loved me in return, with the ardour of a son. There he lies; and all my worldly happiness lies dead with him. But, if the turning of a straw would call him back to life; I would not, for ten thousand worlds, be the turner of that straw, in opposition to the will of God."

5. If we have had a spiritual view of Christ, we shall love and study his holy word. Christ crucified is the central point, wherein the lines of both Testaments coincide. They testify of me, said the Son of God. They testify the greatness of his person, the greatness of his love, and the unspeakable greatness of his condescending humility: they bear witness to the glory of his covenant, the necessity and perfection of his righteousness, the merit of his propitiation, and the prevalency of his intercession; the efficacy of his grace and the freeness of his salvation. And yet, though the scriptures were dictated by his Spirit, and hold

——The earl was struck with the propriety of this seasonable expostulation, and set his heart at rest.

Our way to tranquillity, is, to do likewise: to trace up things to their source, Divine Providence; and there to leave them." Dr. Arrowsmith's Chain of Princ. p. 470.

the lamp to knowledge and happiness, how many cast the precious charter behind their backs, or even trample it under their feet! "though," as one expresses it, "God himself has vouchsafed to commence author, how few will so much as give his works the reading!"—The renowned Scipio Africanus hardly ever had Xenophon's writings out of his hand. Alexander the Great made Homer's poems his constant companion. St. Chrysostom was so fond of Aristophanes' Comedies, that he even laid them under his pillow when he slept. Our matchless Alfred constantly carried Boëthius de Consol. Phil. in a fold of his robe. Tamerlane (if I rightly remember) always carried about with him the History of Cyrus. Bishop Jewel could recite all Horace: and bishop Sanderson, all Tully's Offices. The Italians are said to be such admirers of Tasso, that the very peasants sing him by heart, as they pursue their country labours. The famous Leibnitz could repeat, even in extreme old age, the greatest part of Virgil: and one of the late popes is said to have learned English, purely for the sake of reading the Spectator in its original language. How warmly does Horace recommend the study of the Greek writers to the Roman youth! Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.—How then, ought Christians to study the book of God! Beza, at upwards of eighty years of age, could repeat the whole of St. Paul's Epistles, in the original Greek, and all the Psalms in Hebrew; and, more lately, the learned Witsius, even at a very advanced period of life, could recite almost any passage of scripture, in its proper Hebrew or Greek, together with the context, and criticisms of the best commentators. How will such persons rise in judgment against the negligent professors, the many superficial divines, and the flimsy infidels of the present day! Time has been, when the word of the Lord was precious in this land: so precious, that (in the reign of Henry VIII. if I mistake not) an

honest farmer once gave a cart-load of hay for one leaf of St. James' epistle in English. Now indeed, through the goodness of God, the manna of his word lies in abundance round our tents. But what is the consequence? Most of us are for reading any book, except that which can make us wise to salvation. We disrelish even the bread of life: I almost said, we spurn it away with our feet. Hence our spiritual declensions. Hence the Arminianism, the Socinianism, the Deism, and every other pernicious ism of the age. As many of our young clergymen, it is to be feared, subscribe articles and homilies they have never read; so myriads of the laity profess to believe the inspired volume, which they seldom or never open. Hence they themselves lie open to admit the first errors that offer, and to be run away with by any immorality that most easily besets them. The Bible is God's epistle to mankind: and what greater affront can be shown even to an earthly friend, than to throw by his letters unopened and unread?——May we not address the generality of Christians so called, in the words of Mr. Boston? "The dust on one hand, or the finery on the other, about your Bibles, is a witness now, and will at the last day, be a witness of the enmity of your hearts against Christ as a prophet *."

6. A true sight of Christ will inspire and expand our hearts with genuine benevolence, and make us the well-wishers of all mankind. God, the Great Sovereign who giveth no account to any, of his matters, may set what limits he pleases to the communications of his grace, as we see he does to the bounties of his providence. But we, as social beings, are under a moral obligation, as we have opportunity to do good unto all men. Christian benevolence may be resembled to the shining of the sun; which magnificent luminary sheds its warmth at

* Four-fold State, p. 82.

large, and rises with general healing in its wings, so that nothing is entirely hid from the heat thereof: yet there are some climates, where its beams operate more strongly, than in others. In like manner, our good will should be universal; though its highest actings ought to terminate on the household of faith. God himself deigns to set us the example. He is providentially loving unto every man, and his mercies in a way of temporal bounty, are more or less over all his works: yet his choicest favours terminate on his own elect, whom he loved from everlasting, and in whom is all his delight.

7. Lastly, Let those whose hearts have been opened, and the eyes of whose faith have been enlightened by grace, to see the loveliness * and the preciousness † of Christ; let such rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Yet a little while, and, to adopt the excellent language of our church, "we who know him now by faith, shall have the full fruition of his glorious godhead." After a few more rising and setting suns, a few more sermons, and a few more prayers, a few more conflicts and a few more comforts, we shall be with him whom our souls love, and who loves our souls. Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet fully appear what we shall be, how great our bliss, nor how bright our glory: but this we know, and this is knowledge enough at present, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

* Cant. v. 16. † 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Uofm

# SERMON IV.

## GOD'S MINDFULNESS OF MAN.

He will ever be mindful of his Covenant. PSAL. cxl. 5.

The Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us. PSAL. cxv. 12.

# SERMON IV.

PSALM viii. 4.

*What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

DAVID is supposed by some, to have written this Psalm, long before his elevation to the Jewish throne; while he was yet a youth, busied in tending his father's cattle on the plains of Bethlehem. And we shall presently see, that there are passages in the Psalm itself, which seem to justify this conjecture. It is not only an hymn of praise, addressed to the Messiah; but likewise, one of the finest pastorals, any where extant.

David appears to have had, almost from his very childhood, the sublimest talents for poetry, and an exquisite taste in music. His harp, therefore, was probably his frequent companion in the fields, when he exercised the occupation of a shepherd. And having experienced the inestimable blessing of early conversion, he did not debase his poetic genius, nor prostitute his skill in the harmony of sounds, by devoting either of them to the contemptible purposes of versified nonsense and unmanly dissipation; but his heart being as rightly tuned as his harp, his happiness and highest recreation were, to sing the praises of the God he loved, and to anticipate something of that sublime employ on earth, which will, in heaven, be for ever the business and the bliss of those who are redeemed from among men.

It is worthy of remark, that this was the time (namely, while David was herdsman to his father Jesse, and filled up the intervals of his employment with holy meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving),

when God himself vouchsafed to mention him under the most glorious appellation that, perhaps, was ever conferred on a created being; a man after my own heart *. A title which does not appear to have been given him so much as once, after his advancement to royalty. For though neither height of magnificence, nor depth of abasement, can separate a saint from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus †; yet, even after a work of grace has passed upon the heart in regeneration, such is the power of surviving depravity, that not one perhaps in twenty, of God's people, can, humanly speaking, be trusted with prosperity. Let every afflicted believer, therefore, rejoice in that he is made low. God deals out our comforts and our sorrows, with exact, unerring hand, in number, weight, and measure. Hence, we have not, either of joy or adversity, a grain too little or too much. If less tribulation would suffice, less would be given. We are bad enough, with all our troubles: what then should we be, if we were exercised with none?

* 1 Sam. xiii. 14. with Acts xiii. 22.—This celebrated periphrasis has occasioned no little disquisition. The learned Grotius, with his usual dryness, thinks it to be synonymous with electum de populo, or chosen out from among the people: i. e. God calls David a man after his own heart, because he had made choice of him to be king of Israel.——Vatablus renders the phrase by qui mihi cordi est, a man whose interest God had at heart.——But, surely, the lowest sense which can be justly assigned to this exalted title, is, that David should (as the apostle adds, in the above passage) fulfil παντα τα θελημματα, all the wills, purposes and designs of God, respecting the government of Israel: viz. by supplanting the family of Saul; extending the Jewish territory; maintaining the religion of the true God; and laying the foundation of a more splendid worship, by preparing materials for the erection of the temple.——For my own part, however, I think that the words include something more and higher: namely, that David was an object of God's eminent and peculiar favour; destined to be a signal instance of the sovereignty of Divine Providence, and, in much of his conduct, a shining pattern of grace. A man, in short, whom the Deity loved, and was determined to honour.

† Rom. viii. 39.

In order to our entering into the true spirit and propriety of the Psalm before us; we must form to ourselves an idea of David the stripling, and think we see him watching his flocks, in a summer's night, under the expanded canopy of the skies.—The air is still. The heavens are serene. The moon, arrived at the full, is pursuing her majestic, silent course. The stars (like peeresses on a coronation solemnity) assume their brightest robes, to attend the beauteous sovereign of the night, while both moon and stars concur to shed a soft undazzling lustre on all the subjacent landscape. David, at this happy period, a blameless youth; unpoisoned with ambition, and unfascinated by the witch craft of court corruption; his heart unpolluted with lust, and his hands undipped in blood; is seated on a rising hillock, or on the protuberant root of some stately tree.—All is hushed. Not a bough rustles. Not a leaf "trembles to the breeze." The silent flocks are either carelessly grazing by his side, or slumbering securely at his feet. The birds have suspended their songs, until waked by superior sweetness of his voice, and the music of his hand. For, charmed with the loveliness of the scene, and wrapt by the holy Spirit into a seraphic flame of exalted devotion, he has lain aside his crook—he has taken up his harp—and is transmitting to the throne of God, these grateful, these inexpressibly beautiful strains of admiring thankfulness: When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him?—Then taking a survey of the pleasing objects that surrounded him, he thus goes on to sing: Thou hast made man a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and

the beasts of the field; the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas. O Lord our governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world!

So warbled the sweet singer of Israel, and thus he addressed God the Son, almost eleven hundred years prior to his Incarnation. For, that the Psalm, in its highest import, refers to Christ, is evident from Matth. xxi. 16. and, especially, from the second chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, where a considerable part of the Psalm is cited by the apostle, and expressly applied to the adorable Mediator between God and men.

Jesus, considered as a divine person, is Jehovah our governor, whose name, i. e. whose manifestations of infinite wisdom, beneficence and power, in a way both of creation and providence, are excellent throughout all the earth.—He set his glory above the heavens, or rendered the riches of his love more signally and illustriously noble than the brightest and noblest of his material works, when he entered into covenant with the Father and the Spirit, and graciously stipulated to wear our nature and to bear away our sins. In the fulness of time, after he had actually accomplished his double warfare of obedience and sufferings, he, literally, set his glory above the heavens, when he ascended up on high, and his glorified humanity took possession of its throne, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

He it is, who displays the efficacy, the sovereignty, and the independency of his almighty operation, in bringing to pass the greatest ends, by seemingly, the feeblest and most inadequate means: or (as David, evidently alluding to his own tender age, speaks at the 2d verse), who has ordained strength out of the mouths even of babes and sucklings. Armed with the power that cometh from above, the unaccoutred

youth had slain a lion and a bear*. Inspired with supernatural prowess, the same ruddy stripling, afterwards, overcame the proud, gigantic champion of Philistia. These providential events were, indeed, strange and astonishing. But the religious part of David's character was truly miraculous. A beardless lad, not very superior in years to a babe and suckling, is exalted by the holy Spirit, into a prophet of the Lord. He testifies of the Saviour, many hundred years before the Saviour appeared: and is not only a true believer in, but, a distinguished herald of, that adorable person, in whom the elect of all nations are blessed.

By the righteousness of his meritorious life, and by the atonement of his infinitely precious death, Jesus "bruised the serpent's head," or inverted the subtilty, baffled the power, and defeated the wish of that apostate spirit, who seeks the destruction of man: thus silencing the enemy and the avenger.—Seek you farther proofs of the Saviour's dignity and divinity? not only the earth, but the heavens also are the work of his fingers, the monument of his creating power. The moon and the stars are of his ordaining: and, without him, was not any thing made that was made. In a word, he was the builder of the universe; and he rules the universe he built. Well, therefore, may we bend the knee of our souls before him, or rather, fall prostrate in the dust at his footstool, and ask, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? If Elizabeth, the parent of John the Baptist, could say, to the Virgin Mary, Who am I, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? much more may God's elect stand astonished at his love, and ask, "What are we, that the Lord God of Israel should, in person, visit his people, and redeem them to the Father by his blood †.

* 1 Sam. xvii. 36. † Luke i. 68.

In the text, two acts of God are distinctly pointed out; namely, his mindfulness of us, and his visiting us; which gracious acts I shall consider, not only as proofs of the Messiah's love to his people; but, indiscriminately, as evidences of the love mutually shown to sinners, by all the persons in the Trinity, Father, and Son, and Spirit, the co-equal Three that bear record in heaven, are one, not only in nature and essence, but in the good-will they bear to man: and their undivided love calls for our undivided praise.

I. God's mindfulness of his people is not a thing of yesterday. There never was a period, when he had not our interests at heart. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him*. It is, like himself, without beginning of days or end of years. We could not fear him from everlasting; because we did not exist until very lately; but his mercy towards us was coeternal with himself. In consequence of this, we are made to fear him in time. Filial fear is a covenant-blessing, given only to the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty; who says, I will put my fear into their hearts†. Hence, they shall not depart from him after conversion. And thus his mercy, as it was from everlasting, is to everlasting upon them that fear him. It neither began with to-day, nor shall end with to-morrow. But he, who laid the foundation of their happiness, in his own eternal purpose, shall lay on the top-stone with joy, crying, Grace, grace unto it‡.—That God was mindful of us for good, appears,

(1.) From the decree of election, whereby we were chosen in Christ, to grace and glory, before the world began. This act of sovereign love is the very source and fountain head of all the other blessings that are conferred on the heirs of salvation.

* Psalm ciii. 17. † Jer. xxxii. 40. ‡ Zech. iv. 7.

Redemption, justification, effectual calling, holiness, continuance in good works to the end, and everlasting happiness in heaven; all flow from this leading capital, fundamental privilege. Election is the tree of life, whose leaves and fruit are for the healing of the nations: for, whom God did predestinate, them [τουτους, those very persons] he also called; and whom he called, them [τουτους, those very persons] he also justified; and whom he justified, them [τουτους, these very persons] he also glorified *.

There are some who talk much concerning the dignity of human nature. Upon Christian principles, the dignity of man is great indeed: a dignity however, not natural, but derived from the condescending lover and restorer of lost sinners. That God should be mindful of men, prior to their being; that God should settle the inheritance of heaven on his children, ere suns gave light, or planets moved; that God should write the name of the meanest saint, in the book of life, with the pen of everlasting love; that he should appoint them, not to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; is a consideration that inspires the believing soul with the most sublime and astonishing views of that goodness, which not only gave apostate men the preference to apostate angels, but exalted the church of God to a state of dignity and glory unexperienced even by the angels that never fell.—May we, by the holiness of our lives, be enabled to give substantial proof of our interest in his electing favour; and be living exemplars of that inestimable declaration and promise, This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise †.

(2.) God showed his mindfulness of us, in the covenant of redemption, made with his Son and Spirit, before all worlds, for the recovery of his church and people, who it was known, would fall

* Rom. viii. 30. † Isa. xliii. 21.

by iniquity. For it would infinitely detract from the dignity of Christianity, to imagine, that the plan of redemption was a temporary expedient, hurried up on a sudden, and fetched in, ex improviso, to remedy an unforeseen disaster: as if the Deity, upon a disappointment of his views, and an unlucky disconcertment of his measures, had recourse, pro re natâ, to the best salvo that the exigence of affairs suggested. Such an idea of God and religion can never, I should imagine, be coolly admitted by any thinking person. And yet this view of things must be admitted, if we reject the scripture account of the eternal covenant of grace and redemption.

There can be no succession, in the knowledge of God. He whose understanding is infinite, cannot know that now, which he did not always know.—Men, indeed, grow wise by observation and experience. But eternity itself can add no improvement to the knowledge of that all-wise, all-comprehending mind, to whom all futurity is open, "from whom no secrets are hid," and who holds, in his own hand, the entire chain of second causes. These are first principles, equally inculcated by reason, the religion of nature; and by Christianity, the religion of the Bible. It would lead me too far, should I at present, pursue the argument in its amplitude and extent. Enough, I apprehend, has been observed, to justify my laying down this, for an undoubted axiom, that Adam's apostasy, and all the consequence of it, were, from everlasting, foreseen and foreknown of God; who, for reasons we cannot see, decreed to permit it. And I defy the ablest advocates of revelation, to defend the Christian religion, clearly and solidly, upon any other principle. God's decreeing, or resolving, to permit the fall, did not, however, make him the author of it; for he can neither tempt nor be tempted to sin. But, had he not determined to permit the lapse of our first parents, he could not have foreknown it (for, with-

out such a permissive determination, the event had been uncertain; and uncertainty of event can be no basis for certain prescience): and, had he not foreknown it, he could not have made provision, beforehand, in the covenant of grace, for the restoration of sinners:—not to ask, where would have been his omniscience?

I conclude then with the scriptures, that, upon a certain foresight of the fall, grace was given us in Christ before the world began *: which could only be given us so very early, in virtue of a covenant made with Christ as the fœderal head, trustee, and representative of his people. To Abraham and to his seed, i. e. to all who should be endued with that faith which is the gift and operation of God, were the promises made: he saith not, unto seeds, as of many; as if the promises of grace and salvation had been made to the elect, in their own proper persons (for that would have been impossible, seeing they had then no personal existence); but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ†. To Christ, therefore, were the promises of the Father made, in behalf of all his believing people. And this could only be done in that covenant of peace, which was between them both.—Nor,

(3.) Did God intermit his gracious mindfulness of man, when (as observed above), for reasons unknown to us, it was his mysterious pleasure actually to permit the fall of Adam.—We have a saying in common life, that prevention is better than recovery. But, in the present question, the proverb fails.—Satan neither stole nor forced his way into paradise. He neither escaped the notice, nor mastered the power of him whose presence filleth heaven and earth. Omniscience cannot be deceived. Omnipresence cannot be eluded. Omnipotence cannot be overpowered. With regard, therefore, to the

* 2 Tim. i. 9. † Gal. iii. 16.

first entrance of moral and of natural evil; both one and the other would most certainly have been totally precluded, by a Deity possessed of infinite wisdom and power, had not recovery (though we cannot yet discern how) been better than prevention.——The keeper of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, was invariably mindful of his people, even when he suffered human nature to be shipwrecked in Adam. Nay, presently after that mysterious event, Jehovah the Son showed his mindfulness of his covenant and of us, by condescending to be himself, the first preacher of the everlasting gospel; for he did not dismiss our first parents from paradise, until he had solemnly and graciously assured them, that the seed of the woman, the Messiah, born of a virgin mother, should, at the appointed time, destroy the works of the devil, and restore the objects of divine love to more than the glory they had lost.

(4.) God moreover, testifies his mindfulness of his fallen people, by his patience with them, and his providential care of them, during their whole state of unregeneracy. A late eminent person used frequently to say, that "Every faithful minister is immortal, until his work is done:" and it may as truly be asserted of every elect sinner, that he is immortal, until he is born again. It is impossible that any of God's people should die in their sins: for whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and Christ's sheep must be brought home to him in regeneration.* Hence the apostle Jude, writing to believers in general, assures them that they had been sanctified, or set apart, by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called†: or, as it may be rendered, preserved for Jesus Christ; preserved, by providence, in order to be effectually called and converted by grace; of which we have a striking instance in the jailor at Philippi, Acts xvi.

* Rom. viii. 30. John x. 16. † Jude i.

27—31. If we choose more modern proof of this important truth, some very remarkable passages in the life of Colonel Gardiner, prior to his conversion, may tend to convince us of it. Nay, there is, perhaps, hardly a single believer on earth, who, if he looks back on the days that are past, cannot recollect some signal and eminent deliverances from peril and death, which he experienced in the course of providence, long enough before he was savingly turned to God. How often, when either sickness has levelled the dart; or when sudden and unlooked for danger stood with the lifted weapon, ready, in appearance, to hew us down; has an hand, unseen, turned aside the stroke, and a voice, unheard, pronounced us reprieved from death! So careful is the Lord of the harvest, not to reap his people, until he has ripened them!

(5.) After God has brought his children to the saving knowledge of himself, by the effectual call of his holy Spirit, his mindfulness of them appears, farther, in his maintaining the work of grace he has begun, and carrying them on, inamissibly and invincibly, until they receive the end of their faith, even the full and final salvation of their souls. Our faithfulness to God proceeds from God's mindfulness of us. He it is, that preserves us safe amidst the corruption of our own hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the afflictions and allurements of the world. Grace in the soul resembles a glimmering taper, exposed to all the storms that blow, yet unextinguished, and inextinguishable. Wherefore may it defy the force of descending rains, and the fury of conflicting winds? because it is fed and guarded by the unseen hand of him, who is ever mindful of his covenant, and of his covenant people. Nor until he fails, can they. Because I live, says he, ye shall live also. Surely then, we have the highest reason to breathe, from the inmost of your hearts, that self-abasing, that grace-admiring question,

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? To which we may add,

IIdly. Or the son of man, that thou visitest him? for not only his mindfulness, but his gracious visitations, in consequence of that mindfulness, challenge our deepest wonder, and our warmest praise.

In a very particular manner might God be said to visit us, when Jehovah the son was manifested in the flesh.—Will God indeed dwell with men? said Solomon, at his dedication of the temple. Yes, may we reply, on the present festival: God did indeed dwell with men, that men might for ever dwell with God. The brightness of his Father's glory, and the express * image of his person; he who made and upholds all things by the word of his power, condescended in his great humility to visit earth; that sinners might be, not transitory visitants, but everlasting inhabitants of the highest heavens. And though he is now entered on his glorified state above, he still vouchsafes, invisibly and spiritually, to visit his people below.

He visits them in conversion, as he once literally visited the tomb of Lazarus; and, by the effectual agency of his Spirit, calls to himself whom he will †, and quickens those who are dead in trespasses and sins ‡. For this unspeakable blessing, man is singly and solely indebted to efficacious grace. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; it is not owing to human pliableness, nor human works, but it is only of God that showeth mercy §. After I was turned, I repented, is the language of God's book ‖, and the experience of God's people. We are first turned by him; and then we repent unto life. As Christ was born into the world, for us; so the

* Express image, Heb. i. 3.—I should not scruple to render the word χαρακτηρ by exact counterpart: as wax (from whence the metaphor seems to be taken) bears the very figure, and is therefore the exact counterpart, of the seal or stamp by which it is impressed.——

† Mark iii. 13. ‡ Eph. ii. 1. § Rom. ix. 16. ‖ Jer xxxi. 19.

visitation of his grace gives us to experience, what our church justly styles, that "new birth unto righteousness," which makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Providential dispensations are also to be considered as visits from God. Is affliction the Christian's lot? It is a visit from heaven. Thou hast visited, thou hast tried me, says David. God never uses, the flail, but when his corn wants threshing.

> "Our hearts are fastened to the world
> by strong and various ties;
> But every sorrow cuts a string,
> and urges us to rise*."

Afflictions are as nails, driven by the hand of grace, which crucify us to the world. The husbandman ploughs his lands, and the gardener prunes his trees, to make them fruitful. The jeweller cuts and polishes his diamonds, to make them shine the brighter. The refiner flings his gold into the furnace, that it may come out the purer. And God afflicts his people, to make them better. "To thank God for mercies," said a pious divine of the last century, "is the way to increase them, to thank him for miseries, is the way to remove them.—— Afflictions are then blessings to us, when we can bless God for afflictions: whose single view, in causing us to pass through the fire, is only to separate the sin he hates from the soul he loves." And, in all his dealings with them, let them remember, that, though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion: at the worst of times, he will either suit his dispensations to their strength, or accommodate their strength to his dispensations. And when the faith of an afflicted saint is in exercise, his graces, as a good man expresses it, "resemble a garden of roses,

* Dr. Young.

or a well of rose-water; which, the more they are stirred and agitated by the storm, the sweeter is the fragrance they exhale."

I have already touched on deliverances eminently providential. May not even common preservation and support, from moment to moment, be likewise numbered among the instances of God's never ceasing mindfulness and continual visitation?—By him, says the apostle, all things consist. His hand directs, his eye conducts, and his will sustains, the whole universe of spirits, men, and things. With regard to ourselves in particular, have we not each, abundant cause to admire the unintermitted influence and superintendency * of him who is our life and the length of our days †? Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit ‡.

Sanctification, or the soul's recovery of God's spiritual and moral image, is a fruit of the same condescending goodness. As redemption from the guilt of sin is owing to the past visitation of God the Son; so, exemption from the dominion of sin results from the continued visitation of God the Holy Ghost §. His transforming influence resem-

* "God can arm all his creatures against sinful man. The least, and the meanest of them, even a fly, is able to make an end of us, if God give commission." Mr. Parr, on Romans, p. 115.

† Deut. xxx. 20. ‡ Job x. 12.

§ Is it not equally shocking and deplorable, that, to believe in the agency of the holy Spirit, as a converter, sanctifier, and comforter, should be deemed, by very many reputed Christians, the certain mark of a weak, enthusiastic mind? Arminians did not always carry matters to this dreadful excess of palpable irreligion. The departure from the doctrines of the reformation was, for a time, tolerably gradual. The deviation which began toward the latter end of James the Ist's reign, was so gentle and progressive, that the church hardly perceived her descent. In the reign of his son Charles, archbishop Laud quickened her pace, and, with an high hand, drove her still farther from herself. —I do not, however, intend to mark at present, the several waxings and wanings of Arminianism, in our church and nation. The compass of the subject is too extended, and requires more latitude than a

bles the agency of some consummate painter; who does not complete his pictures at a single sitting, but

note will allow. I shall therefore, in this place only observe, that we seem now, to be almost got to the bottom of the hill. We have well nigh, entirely quitted Mount Sion, for the valley of Hinnom. We seem to be casting off all regard even to the modesty of appearances. No longer satisfied with deserting the bulwarks, nor with even silently sapping the foundations, multitudes among us are for openly storming the citadel: as if it were a point of settled emulation, who of us should, on one hand, run farthest from the doctrinal system of the church; and, on the other, contribute most vigorously to its demolition. As one melancholy proof of this, let us instance in the doctrine of the blessed Spirit's inhabitation. "By receiving the holy Spirit," some divines have told us, "is meant nothing more than the acquisition, the cultivation, and the practice of moral virtue." Is not this, sinking the religion of Christ ten degrees below heathenism? for even an heathen has taught us to distinguish between the sacred influence, which makes men good; and the goodness, which is the fruit of that influence. A distinction as obvious as that of cause and effect. The fruit of the Spirit, says old fashioned St. Paul, is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, &c. Gal. v. 22.—"The Spirit of God and moral virtue are the same." I suppose, we shall be told next, that the atonement, propitiation, and sacrifice of Christ, are only other words for repentance. Let us, with the clue of the modern explication in our hand, make trial of its value; and see, whether it will not lead us into a labyrinth of nonsense and impiety, instead of extricating us from that of supposed enthusiasm. Jesus was led up of moral virtue into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, Matth. iv. 1. And he saw moral virtue descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, Matth. ii. 16. God is a moral virtue, John iv. 24. They spake, as moral virtue gave them utterance, Acts ii. 4. Then moral virtue said to Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot, Acts viii. 29. Ye have received the moral virtue of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Moral virtue itself beareth witness with our virtue, that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 15, 16. God hath revealed them to us by his moral virtue; for moral virtue searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. God hath sent forth the moral virtue of his Son into your hearts, Gal. iv. 6. The communion of moral virtue be with you all, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.—Applied to those parts of our church offices, likewise, wherein mention is made of the holy Spirit, the clue will be equally serviceable to the argument of those rational expositors.—If we do, in true earnest, wish for the return of moral virtue, we ourselves must first return to the doctrines from whence we are fallen. We must believe them, as well as subscribe them; and preach them, as well as believe them; and

gives them the gradual improvements of his pencil, till he has touched each of his elegant performances into a master-piece of propriety and beauty.—— Philip, king of Maçedon, is said to have rejoiced, not so much at his having a son (Alexander), as at his son's having Aristotle for a tutor. A Christian is not so thankful to God, for the gift of an immortal soul, as for the still superior gift of the sacred Spirit, to renew, to comfort, and to sanctify that soul, and render its immortality a blessing.

In the means of grace, also, are the saints visited of God. The ordinances of the gospel (such as public and private prayer, attendance on the Lord's table, reading the word, and hearing it preached) are a kind of half-way house, where God meets and communes with his children on their road to heaven. These are the windows and the lattice*, through which the king of saints displays part of his beauty and glory to the eye of faith. When our king Edward IV. had

practically adorn them, by our own lives, as well as preach them; or moral virtue, which already seems rising on the wing, will totally take her flight.

I will recompence the religious reader, for the horror which the interpretation just refuted, must have given him, by transcribing two passages from the learned Dr. Stanhope, dean of Canterbury. Every body, who knows any thing of this respectable writer, knows that he was, in the main, extremely remote from those of our established doctrines, which now go by the nick-name of Calvinism: a term, by the way, which, like raw head and bloody bones, seems merely calculated to frighten the children of Arminius from the Bible and the church.—— In Dr. Stanhope's translation of bishop Andrews' Devotions, this eminent prelate, and his worthy translator, thus express themselves: "I do also believe, that, by the illumination and powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, a peculiar people has been called from all quarters of the world, to be knit into one society, united and distinguished by belief of the truth and holiness of life. Transl. p. 20. "In the Holy Ghost, I believe a power from on high, by operations, supernatural and invisible, but yet with efficacy undeniable, transforming and renewing the soul to holiness." Ibid. p. 60.

May my hearers, my readers, and myself, experience the reality of these blessed truths, more and more, to the perfect day!

* Cant. ii. 9.

an interview with Lewis VIII. of France, on Pequigny bridge, the two monarchs conversed through a grate-work of iron interposed between them. In a manner something similar, do believers on earth, carry on their intercourse with God. They see a little of his loveliness, and they hear a few comfortable whispers of his voice: but still there is a barrier between. Hence, they believe, they hope, they love, they rejoice, they obey imperfectly: they know but in part, and they are happy but in part. By and by, the interposing vail will be entirely done away: and from catching a few occasional drops of blessedness, at the channel of outward ordinances below, they shall derive for ever, the fulness of uninterrupted joy, from the fountain head above.—— Sweet, indeed, and inestimably precious, are the minutest, the most glimmering, and most transient views of interest in the Father's electing grace, and in the unsearchable merits of Christ. For the holy Spirit to visit us with the light of his countenance, and to bless us with the knowledge of salvation, by bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God; is at once, the certain earnest, and the richest foretaste of that consummate bliss, prepared for the vessels of mercy, before the foundation of the world.—But it may be that you walk in darkness; that your views, or even hopes, of interest in Christ are few in number, and of short continuance; so that you experience very little of the holy Spirit's visitation in a way of joy and comfort. This was often the case with David himself, the penman of this sweet Psalm: Even from my youth up, says he elsewhere, thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind. But let me ask, did you ever, at any time, or under any ordinance, so much as once, experience fellowship with God, or a moment's peace and joy in believing? If you have, be thankful for it. It was a token for good. It was a visit from above. God is thine, even though (which, how-

ever, is unlikely) you should walk in darkness to your dying day. He does not tantalize his people: but having given thee a taste of his love, he will in his own way, and in his own time, satisfy thee with the fulness of joy. When we part with an earthly friend, one of the most embittering considerations is, that we may, perhaps, see his face no more* below; enjoy no more of his company, and receive no more of his visits. But when the holy Spirit withdraws the comforts of his presence, and is as one that hides himself, or as one that is gone into a far country, we may be certain of his return. His consolations may stay long, but they will come back at last. You may depend on a fresh visit, in due season. They who have felt his gracious influence once, shall feel it again.—— There is a true ground of joy, in reflecting even on past experience (see Psalm xlii. 6.) Communion with God leaves a calm and a sweetness upon the soul, which are remembered after many days: as a vase of rich perfume, or of odoriferous unguent, scents the air with fragrance, even after the vessel that contained it, is stopped up and put by.

Once more. God may be said to visit his people, when he calls them away from earth to heaven. To them, who are in a state of grace, death is no more than a friendly visit from the God of love. "As a person" (to use the comparison of an excellent writer) "that takes a walk in his garden, if he spy a beauteous full-blown flower, gathers it, and gives it a place in his bosom; so the Lord takes as it were, his walks in his gardens, the churches, and gathers his lilies, souls fully ripe for glory, and with delight takes them to himself." Not satisfied with only deputing his angels to escort believers to the sky, he comes himself, in the manifestations of his presence, and, as it were, takes them by the hand, and leads them safe to Zion his holy mountain.—

* Acts. xx. 38.

What is this world, but a sort of an academy, wherein God's children are placed for education? And, when their education is finished, when they have taken their degree in holiness, and are properly qualified for heaven, the Father of mercy orders out the chariot of death, to convey his children home. From that hour, he no longer visits them, but they visit him; and are with him, for ever and ever.

O, what a burst of joy, what a scene of glory opens to the ravished view, and beams on the triumphant soul of a saint, in the moment of departure! The death-bed of a Christian is the antichamber of heaven, and the very suburbs of the New Jerusalem.

When the silver cords of life loosen apace,——when the last pins of the earthly tabernacle are taking out,——when the lips of the expiring saint turn pale, and the blush forsakes his cheek, and what little breath he draws returns cold,——when his limbs quiver,——when the pulse forgets to beat,——when the crimson current in his veins begins to stagnate, and the hovering soul is just on the wing for glory——fast as the world darkens upon his sight, fast as the το θνητον, the mortal part (2 Cor. v. 4.) of his composition, subsides and falls off from the dis-imprisoned spirit; he brightens into the perfect image of God, and kindles into more than an angel of light. Jehovah visits him with smiles of everlasting love; Jesus beckons him to the regions of eternal day; the blessed Spirit of God wafts him, with a gentle gale, over the stream of death. The angelic potentates deem it an honour to usher the ransomed soul, and convoy the precious freight. Dis-embodied saints, who were landed long before, throng the blissful coast, to congratulate the newborn seraph on his safe arrival.—When Virgil entered the Roman theatre, the whole auditory testified their respect, by rising from their seats. When a believer lands in glory, the whole church triumphant

may be supposed to welcome the new-admitted peer. He makes a public entry into the celestial city, the Jerusalem which is above. As joy is in heaven, when a sinner repents; so joy is in heaven, when a saint is taken home.

God will, indeed, pay his people one visit more, and but one. I mean, in the morning of the resurrection, when he shall re-build their bodies, into temples of perfection, immortality and glory. The souls of the regenerate, from the instant they take their flight, are admitted to the sight and fruition of his glorious godhead; and their bodies lie down in the grave, as a prince retires to his wardrobe, or as a bride withdraws to her closet, to come forth with additional beauty and lustre, by and by. Like a tender watchful parent, God is mindful of his elect, while they are fast asleep: and, at the destined season, he will bring them from the east, and gather them from the west; he will say, to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, Isa. xliii. 5. Their dust shall praise him. All their bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee? when that which was sown in corruption, weakness, and dishonour, is raised in incorruption, power and glory. He, who raised up Jesus from the dead, will also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you, Rom. viii. 11. That same divine Spirit, the third person in the godhead, who, on earth, quickens and raises the souls of the elect from a death in sin to the life of righteousness, will be immediately concerned in re-quickening their bodies, the temples in which he dwells, and to which he is incomprehensibly united even while they lie mouldering in the grave. In his book are all their members written. Every essential atom of their dust stands registered in the volume of omniscience. Every atom is numbered. Every atom is precious in his sight. Nor shall a single

atom be lost. Whatever changes their bodies may undergo, by a resolution into their first principles, or even by incorporation with other beings; the constituent particles requisite to identity, shall, when the trumpet sounds, be collected from every quarter of the globe, whither they have been scattered; or, more justly speaking, treasured up: for the world is but a vast store-house, wherein the dust of the saints is reposited. What though, for a few days and nights, we lend our bodies to the tomb,

*Join the dull mass, increase the trodden soil,*
*And sleep till earth herself shall be no more?*

the grave is but a steward, entrusted with our ashes, and responsible for the charge. Soon will the several elements resign their deposit, and give back the loan; the hallowed dust of God's elect; O death! no longer thine. While their souls are happy in the converse of Christ and angels, their bodies lie refining in the tomb, until the latter have slept away their dross, that both may be glorified together.—I shall only observe further,

1. That God is mindful of his saints, and visits them in all these respects, not for any merit of theirs, but freely, and for his own name's sake. He first gives them grace, and then glory. He makes them saints, and crowns them angels. "We love persons and things," says the excellent Dr. Arrowsmith, "because they are lovely: but God loves his people first, and makes them lovely afterwards. Our cause of love is in the objects loved; but the cause of God's love is entirely in himself. We were predestinated after the counsel of his own will; Eph. i. 11. not after the prior good inclinations of ours."——And, indeed, the text plainly teaches this most important truth: for, if the righteous were before hand with God, i. e. if there were any goodness in the human will, of which God himself

was not the absolute author and efficient, David must have asked a very absurd and a very heterodox question, in saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

2. If Jehovah in all his persons, if Father, Son, and Spirit, are thus mindful of men; O let men in return, be mindful of God! mindful of his truths, mindful of his ordinances, mindful of his love, mindful of his word, mindful of his providence, mindful of his commandments! I wish every one of you what I wish for myself; a clear head, a warm heart, and an holy life: a mind enlightened into a judicious knowledge and perception of the gospel doctrines, in all their purity, harmony, and extent; an heart warmed with the vital experience of grace, with the love of Christ, and the consolations of his Spirit; from whence will infallibly proceed a life practically devoted to God, and a conversation adorned with every Christian and moral virtue.—— To this end, let the Psalmist's prayer be yours. Be mindful of me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation! that I may, for myself in particular, see the felicity of thy chosen, and rejoice with the gladness of thy nation, and glory with thine inheritance, Psalm cvi. 4.

# SERMON V.

## CLERICAL SUBSCRIPTION NO GRIEVANCE:

OR,

## THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PROVED TO BE THE DOCTRINES OF CHRIST.

IN A

# DISCOURSE

PREACHED

## AT AN ANNUAL VISITATION

OF THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF EXETER, HELD AT COLUMPTON,

TUESDAY, MAY 12th, 1772.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son.—2 JOHN 9.

Quod vetus est, in Religione, sequamur. BURGERSDIC.

" If any man be a dumb Christian, not professing his faith openly, but cloking and colouring himself, for fear of danger in time to come; he giveth men occasion, justly and with good conscience, to doubt lest he have not the grace of the Holy Ghost within him: because he is tongue-tied, and does not speak."

Homily for Whitsunday. Part I.

# SERMON V.

MATTHEW iv. 23.

*And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom.*

AT a time when the adversaries of Christ and of his church, are leaving no effort untried to extinguish the knowledge of him, and to accomplish the demolition of that; at a time, when the insidious and the daring are on full scent after every measure, which art can suggest, or insolence avow, to subvert an establishment built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, having Jesus Christ himself for its chief corner-stone; it eminently behoves those, whom providence hath stationed as watchmen upon the walls of Sion, to sound the needful alarm, and to put God's professing people on their guard, lest, being led away with the error of the wicked, they fall from their own stedfastness.

With a view to drive a nail in the ark; and to show my willingness at least, to contribute something, though ever so little, toward a purpose so important; I have, on this public occasion, made choice of the words now read: to which I was the rather induced, as they naturally open a way for pointing out what those doctrines are, or what that gospel of the kingdom is, which were taught and preached by him who spake as never man spake.

The intentional destroyers of our national church profess a mighty veneration for the scriptures: and are perpetually crying out, in the much-prostituted

words of the celebrated Chillingworth, "The Bible, the Bible is the religion of protestants." It is certain, that the Bible ought to be the religion of all protestants: but it is no less certain, that there are some protestants, whose religion has no more concord with the Bible, than Belial has with Christ. Witness the gentlemen, who assemble at the Feather's Tavern in the Strand, for the laudable purpose of smiting their Mother under the fifth rib. Surely, the Bible is not the religion of such protestants! If they revered the original, would they seek to demolish the transcript? If they regarded the fountain, would they labour, first, to poison, and then to cut off the stream? I wish, the true cause of their enmity against the vine, may not be an hatred of the sacred soil in which it grows. They would perhaps love the church better, if the Bible and the church were less agreed. No unprejudiced person will censure this apprehension, as hasty and uncharitable, who considers the extreme thinness of that partition, by which Socinianism and infidelity are divided from each other.

That the whole chain of doctrines, comprised in our public standards as a church, are perfectly coincident with that system of religious truths which God the Son made the grand subjects of his own personal ministry on earth, will, I hope, be sufficiently proved, in the course of our present inquiry. Nor do I think, that the meditations even of this reverend and respectable assembly can be directed into a more suitable channel, than by briefly reviewing the first principles of the doctrine of Christ *, as declared and asserted by that adorable person in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge †. Permit me, therefore, my honoured brethren, to put you in remembrance of these things, though, I would wish to take for granted, that many of us

* Heb. vi. 1. † Col. ii. 3.

already know them; and that some of us are established in the present truth. The articles of the faith once delivered to the saints (*a*), are not points of idle curiosity, or barren speculation; but enter deeply into our comfort and holiness as Christians: consequently, they cannot be too frequently reviewed, nor too attentively surveyed.—Let me likewise intimate, that they cannot be pointed out with too much plainness and sincerity. If trimming and hypocrisy, duplicity and adulation, be justly considered as indications both of guilt and meanness, even in the common intercourse of civil and social life; how much deeper guilt must he incur, and what transcendent contempt must he deserve, who, from sinister motives of honour, interest, or applause, would dare to temporize in holy things, and either maim the body of religious doctrine by a partial display of it, or veil and disguise it with the cloud of artificial misrepresentation! He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: for what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord (*b*)? An inspired prophet hath declared, Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully (*c*). An apostle hath said, Do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, sought to please them at the expence of truth, I should not be the servant of Christ (*d*). Jesus Christ himself hath affirmed, Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, i. e. of me and of my doctrines, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, i. e. him shall the Son of man disown, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (*e*). A de-

(*a*) Jude 3. (*b*) Jer. xxiii. 28. (*c*) Jer. xlviii. 10. (*d*) Gal. i. 10.

(*e*) Mark viii 38.——I was formerly well acquainted with two worthy persons in the ministry, who were eminently pious, and extensively useful. One of these died in 1759, the other in 1761. I thought, that if ever any men in the world were faithful to the light God had given them, these were. And yet, in their last illnesses, they had such a feeling sight of their past unfaithfulness,

nunciation this, sufficient to make every minister's ears to tingle, and his heart to tremble!—Be it so, then, that a faithful exhibition of the whole counsel of God, so far as he has been pleased to reveal it, may expose his messengers to the risk of being deemed unfashionable preachers. I trust, we are neither to be "ravished with the whistling," nor frightened by the phantom of a name. For my own part, was it possible for me to preach before the whole universe at once, I would make no scruple to acknowledge it as my heart's desire and prayer, that I may never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ (*a*), and that the doctrines of grace may never be out of fashion with me, so long as they remain in the Bible. I wish to assert the truth, the whole

as almost reduced them for a time, to a despair of salvation. The former of them said, he "only wished to live, that he might have an opportunity of preaching the gospel in a fuller manner than he had ever yet done." The latter cried out, in an agony of distress, "God hides the light of his face from my soul, and is putting me to bed in the dark, because, out of a dastardly complaisance to some of my hearers, I have not dwelt enough upon the doctrines of grace, in the course of my public ministrations:" instancing, particularly, in the doctrine of election; "In which doctrine," added he, "I now see such a glory, as I never saw before." Yet, both were good men, and went off comfortably at last: though not until they had been led through a tedious, dismal wilderness of keen remorse and distressing conflicts. A death-bed makes even the children of God themselves feel the importance of divine things, with a force which they rarely, if ever, feel until then. Such as suppress and keep back any part of Christian doctrine, either through fear of men, or to curry the favour of men; and consult their own ease, advancement, or reputation, at the cost of truth and of souls; have a tremendous valley of pain and horror to pass through, ere they reach the kingdom of heaven. If saved at all, it will be as by fire, i. e. in a way of anguish and difficulty. The blood of souls stains deep.—Well, therefore, might the apostle Paul declare, Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel, 1 Cor. ix. 16. Thrice happy are they, who can add, with him, Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.—I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Acts xx. 24. 26, 27. (*a*) Rom. i. 16.

truth, and nothing but the truth; and leave God to take care of consequences.

After what has been premised, it may be superfluous to add, that the brief hints which ensue, though delivered with firmness, and under the strongest conviction of their truth and importance, will yet be offered with all possible humility; and I doubt not of their being received with candour: especially, since I will venture to be quite confident, that face does not answer face in a glass with greater exactness, than the positive determinations of our own church correspond to the voice of scripture, respecting the points that follow.

The object, then, of our present attention, is, To weigh the principles of the church of England in the balance of the sanctuary, by examining, What were those doctrines, which the Lord of life and glory made it his business to inculcate, during his continuance on earth?

In elucidating this question, I shall endeavour to be as brief as possible: if, however, I should find myself unavoidably obliged to trespass on your time, beyond the limits which custom ordinarily assigns on these occasions; I hope, the extent and importance of the subject will conciliate your patience, and plead my excuse. I begin,

I. With the divine inspiration of the writings of the Old Testament. The authenticity of those inestimable books has received the repeated sanction of Christ's unerring attestation. Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (*a*). Those writings he frequently quoted, and to them he frequently appealed, as sacred and infallible: All things, said he, must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me (*b*). Thither he directed the

(*a*) Luke xxiv. 27. (*b*) Ib. v. 44.

study of his disciples: Search the scriptures, for in them ye think, and are right in thinking, that ye have eternal life; these are they that testify of me (*a*). When he declares, that the scripture cannot be broken (*b*); what is it, but to say, "The Old Testament is divine: the facts it relates, and the doctrines it contains, are true: its prophecies are infallible: and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail (*c*)?" When tempted in the wilderness of Judea, he foiled the adversary with weapons taken from that sacred repository: It is written (*d*), was his constant reply, and the constant shield whereby he extinguished and repelled the fiery darts of the wicked one.—In the same night wherein he was betrayed, he acknowledged his power to command the attendance of angels for his deliverance: But how then, said he, shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be (*e*)?—Seeing, therefore, that all these passages relate to the Old Testament only (for they were spoken many years before a line of the New was written), well may the church declare (*f*), "In the name of holy scripture, we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church."

Our Lord having thus vouchsafed to make the scriptures the source from whence he drew, and the test to which he referred, every article of faith which he proposed to mankind; no wonder that he should,

II. In perfect conformity with that unerring standard, assert and teach that grand, fundamental axiom of all true religion, viz. the unity of the godhead. We find him quoting and setting his seal to those words of Moses, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord (*g*). And again, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou

(*a*) John v. 39. (*b*) Ib. x. 35. (*c*) Luke xvi. 17. (*d*) Matth. iv. 4. 7. 10. (*e*) Ib. xxvi. 54. (*f*) Art. i. (*g*) Mark xii. 29.

serve (*a*).—Here, likewise, the church of England speaks in exact unison with her blessed Master: "There is but one living and true God; everlasting; without body, parts, and passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible." (Art. I.)—But, though Christ was careful to maintain inviolably, the unity of the divine essence; he was no less careful in the

IIId place, to assert a plurality of persons in that essence. As to himself, in particular, he expressly averred, All things that the Father hath are mine (*b*): the same moral attributes; the same natural perfections; the same infinity of existence, glory, and power. He associates himself with the Father, as governor of all things in a way of providence: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work (*c*). Immediately after relating which words, the evangelist adds, Therefore the Jews, in whose hearing this declaration was made, sought the more to kill him, because he had said that God was his father, making himself equal with God. Consequently, either Christ, considered in his superior character, must be, truly and properly, a person in the divine nature; or we must file an accusation against him, as guilty of the blackest impiety in claiming an equality with the Most High. We must either blasphemously degrade the Saviour of men infinitely below the level even of that proud and presumptuous cardinal (*d*), who was deservedly impeached for putting himself into co-partnership with his earthly sovereign, by writing, in his public letters, "The king and I (*e*);"—we must either do this, or acknow-

(*a*) Matth. iv. 10. (*b*) John xvi. 15. (*c*) John v. 17.
(*d*) Wolsey. See the parliamentary hist. of England, vol. iii. p. 44.
(*e*) Speaks not Arminianism the same audacious language? Does not the doctrine of free-will, as commonly understood and received, represent man as God's coadjutor, and even as a co-efficient with his

ledge the Messiah to be, what most certainly he is, in concert with the Father and the sacred Spirit, God over all, blessed for ever. When the Jews said to him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God (*a*); would he not have corrected them in a point of such unspeakable moment, if they had really mistaken his meaning? Would he not, like Paul and Barnabas at Lystra, have disavowed, with horror and indignation, all pretensions to divinity, if he had not, in deed and in truth, been divine? Would he, like impious Herod, have acquiesced in the supposed arrogation of Deity, if he had not been God and man in one person? But so far was he from telling his accusers, that they misapprehended his doctine, and that he laid no sort of claim to the honours of the Godhead; he, on the contrary, confirmed the inference they had drawn, by appealing to the miracles he performed: Though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may

Maker? Let the two following citations, from a brace of modern free-willers, stand as a sample. "Thou art courted by Father, Son, and Spirit, thy fellow labourers, for thy good. To glad all heaven, assert, rescue, ennoble, and with bliss eternal crown thyself; for, without thee, in the constituted order of things, heaven is unable to do it." Centaur not Fabul. Let. vi.—The well-known author of the preceding quotation, was a person of learning, sense, and genius. But the indelicate scribbler of that which follows, unable to set his free-will idol on stilts, is forced to let it crawl, in a style as gothic as his doctrine. One would almost imagine, that he inherited the serpent's malediction, Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the days of thy life. He roundly tells us, that, in the conversion of St. Paul and others, "The Lord did wait for man's compliance and improvements;" and that the work of God, upon the human heart, is "as much dependent," for its efficacy, on the compliance and improvements aforesaid, as the birth of Isaac was dependent "on Abraham's copulation with Sarah." See Mr. Walter Sellon's libel on the late Mr. Elisha Coles, p. 224. and p. 227.

To say nothing of the grossness, and even indecency, with which the above libeller conveys his ideas; I appeal to every reader, whether Wolsey's mode of expression was not innocent and humble, when compared with the Arminian phraseology of God and I?—

(*a*) John x. 33.

know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. Would he have left a positive injunction, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father (*a*); if the Son was not equally divine? How would it sound, if a lawgiver was to enact, "That all men should honour the angel Gabriel (for instance) with the same honour which they render to God?" we should tremble with horror; we should be overwhelmed with consternation, at the prodigiousness of such impiety. And why? Because the honour due to God is peculiar to God, and cannot, without sacrilege, be transferred to any inferior being. I conclude, therefore, that, seeing the Redeemer of sinners lays claim to divine honours, he is and must be a divine person. If not, the consequences would be dreadful indeed. From the Arian and Socinian hypothesis, that he is, at most, but the first and highest of created beings, it would follow (I speak it with horror; but follow it inevitably would), that the Jews did right, in branding him for a blasphemer, and in prosecuting him as an impostor. There is no possible medium. Either he was and is what he professed to be, "equal with the Father, as touching his Godhead;" or, he must be deservedly ranked with the most impious and execrable of all human characters. If Christ were not very and eternal God, Christianity would be the most refined system of idolatry, and consequently, the most exquisitely dangerous religion, under heaven.

Nothing short of Trinity in unity could justify the commission, which our blessed Lord gave to his apostles and their successors, to baptize in the name or into the knowledge and worship, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (*b*). If the Son of God were not God the Son, if the Spirit of God were not God the Spirit, the administration

(*a*) John v. 23. (*b*) Matth. xxviii. 19.

of baptism in their name would be an act of the highest profaneness and idolatry. The doctrine, therefore, of a trinity of persons in the unity of one divine nature, is a doctrine of express revelation; a doctrine of the utmost consequence; and which lies at the very root and foundation of the Christian system.

——*In te omnis domus inclinata recumbit.*

Give up this, and you give up all. The whole of Christianity is but an empty name, without it.

Blessed be God, the faith of our own church, respecting this capital point, most exactly harmonizes with the law and the testimony; for she affirms, that, "in unity of this Godhead, there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (*a*)." And, elsewhere, she thus speaks: "That which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality (*b*)."

IV. God's everlasting love to his people, and his gratuitous election of them to grace and glory, constituted another branch of that doctrine, which was taught and preached by Jesus Christ the righteous. He declared, in a solemn address to his Father, made in the hearing of his disciples, Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me (*c*). Now, the Father's love to Christ was truly and properly eternal. It knew no commencement, nor will know a period. For it follows, in the very next verse, Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. Consequently, if the Father loved his people as he loved his Son, he must, according to our Lord's own words, have loved them from everlasting. Hence proceeded his choice and appointment of them in

(*a*) Art. i. (*b*) Communion Service. (*c*) John xvii. 23.

Christ to eternal life, as the end; and to faith and sanctification, as the means. That he has so chosen and appointed them, is evident from the express, repeated declarations of Christ himself. I thank thee, says he, holy Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight (*a*). Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given (*b*). Many are called, but few chosen (*c*). Shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him (*d*)? Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven (*e*). To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, except (*f*) unto those for whom it hath been prepared of my Father. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen (*g*). There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders: insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect (*h*). For the elects' sake, whom he hath chosen, he will shorten those days (*i*). He shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect, from the four winds, from under one end of heaven to the other (*k*). Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared from you from the foundation of the world (*l*). On which passages, and a multitude of others to the same effect, all of which strongly assert a personal and immutable election; I do not know a more scriptural and judicious comment, than those words of our own church: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the worlds were laid,

(*a*) Matth. xi. 25, 26. (*b*) Ib. xiii. 11. (*c*) Ib. xx. 16.
(*d*) Luke xviii. 7. (*e*) Ib. x. 20. (*f*) Αλλ' οις ἡτοιμασαι, Matth. xx. 23. (*g*) John xiii. 18. (*h*) Matth. xxiv. 24.
(*i*) Ib. xxiv. 22. with Mark xiii. 20. (*k*) Matth. xxiv. 31.
(*l*) Ib. xxv. 35.

he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them, by Christ, to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour (*a*)." Of these "vessels made unto honour," she declares the church at large to consist: "The true church," says she, "is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people (*b*)." Hence, in perfect harmony with scripture and herself, she prays, that God would, "make his chosen people joyful (*c*);" that he would "shortly accomplish the number of his elect (*d*);" and declares, that "Almighty God hath knit together his elect, in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son Christ our Lord (*e*)." Neither doth this blessed doctrine, if taken as it is revealed in scripture, and as it stands from thence adopted by the church, tend, either directly or remotely, to the relaxation of human diligence, or to the detriment of good works. The apostle hath declared, that we are chosen to salvation (*f*) through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and no otherwise. And the church, who justly affirms, on one hand, that "The godly consideration of predestination, and of our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons (*g*); takes care, on the other, to remind her children, in the second homily on alms-giving, that it is "by their obedience unto God that they declare openly and manifestly, to the sight of men, that they are the sons of God, and elect of him unto salvation."

V. The covenant of grace and redemption, which subsisted between the three divine persons, before all worlds, in behalf of the church and people of

(*a*) Art. 17. (*b*) Hom. for Whitsunday, p. 1. (*c*) Daily Service. (*d*) Funeral Office. (*e*) Collect for All-Saint's Day. (*f*) 2 Thess. ii. 13. (*g*) Art. 17.

God, held a distinguished place in that scheme of doctrine preached by the Lord from heaven. He termed his precious blood, the blood of the new covenant (*a*): because he shed it in consequence of his own voluntary stipulation with the Father and the Spirit. He told his disciples, I covenant a kingdom unto you, as my Father covenanted unto me (*b*). A little before his last sufferings, he said, Father, the hour is come (*c*): the tremendous, the important hour, agreed and fixed upon, when the counsel of peace was between us both. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do (*d*); and which I promised to execute, when I entered into covenant with thee for the salvation of lost sinners. One of the last words he uttered on the cross, was, It is finished (*e*): I have accomplished all my fœderal engagements, and completed the designs of grace, for which the Lord God and his Spirit sent me (*f*) into the world.

Nor does our excellent establishment lose sight of this momentous article. She makes express mention of God's "counsel secret to us (*g*)." She declares, that Christ "took upon him," or engaged and stipulated, "to deliver man (*h*)." She directs us to "give most humble and hearty thanks to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death of

(*a*) Called "The New Covenant," not in respect of its date (for it is truly and properly eternal), but with respect to the revelation of it to Adam. The covenant of grace, made with Christ before all worlds (Gal. iii. 16. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2.) was not discovered and made known to our first parents, until after they had broken the covenant of works; which latter, being first revealed, is therefore styled The Old Covenant. Adverting to which important distinction, i. e. with a view (not to the manifestation but) to the real date of the covenant of redemption, the apostle terms the blood of Christ, the blood of the everlasting covenant. Heb. xiii. 20.

(*b*) Διατιθεμαι — καθως διεθετο, Luke xxii. 29. (*c*) John xvii 1.
(*d*) Ib. xvii. 4. (*e*) Ib. xix. 30. (*f*) Isa. xlviii. 16.
(*g*) Art. 17. (*h*) Te Deum.

Christ (*a*); because that redemption was founded on a previous treaty, in which all the three persons were mutually concerned. For, what was the covenant of grace, but the concurring will and determination of Father, Son, and Spirit, to save sinners by the intervention of a mediator? "When the fulness of time was come, that is, says our church, the perfection and course of years appointed from the beginning, then God, according to his former covenant and promise, sent a Messiah (*b*)." She adds, that "Christ the Son of God did, by the appointment of his Father, come down from heaven to be wounded for our sakes (*c*):" and reminds us, elsewhere, that our "freedom is purchased with the price of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was ordained to the same purpose before the world was made (*d*)." The covenant of redemption proceeded on a certain and infallible foresight of the fall of man. Hence we need not wonder,

VI. That Christ took care to inculcate the doctrine of original sin. He plainly alluded to the event of the temptation in paradise, when he termed the instrument of it a liar, and a murderer from the beginning (*e*). In declaring, that which is born of the flesh is flesh (*f*), he gives us to understand, that all mankind are, by nature, destitute of that moral image of God in which their first father was created. He represents this universal, hereditary corruption of the human race as the source from whence every actual sin proceeds: from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man (*g*). Well, therefore, might he observe to

(*a*) Communion Service. (*b*) Homily on the Nativity.
(*c*) Second Hom. on the Passion. (*d*) Hom. on the Resurrection.
(*e*) John viii. 44. (*f*) Ib. ii. 6. (*g*) Mark vii. 21—23.

Nicodemus, Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again; for, except a man be born again, born from above, inwardly and outwardly renewed by the supernatural power of the blessed Spirit, whose purifying agency resembles that of water, he cannot see the kingdom of God (*a*); he can neither be a subject of the kingdom of grace here, nor have a part and lot in the kingdom of glory hereafter. Warranted by these express and solemn asseverations of Christ, the church affirms, that, "original, or birth-sin, is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man who naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is [quám longissimè] gone as far as possible from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil (*b*)." So in the first part of the homily for Whitsunday, she draws this double portrait of man in the state of nature, and of man in a state of grace: "Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God; without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions; if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus. Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate men, and, as it were, to bring them forth anew; so that they shall be nothing like the men they were before."

VII. Pardon of sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by the atonement of his own propitiatory sufferings and death, was another of those truths which he taught and preached.

Prior to Adam's fall, the law insisted only on a sinless persevering obedience, as the term and condi-

(*a*) John iii. 3. 5. 7. (*b*) Art. ix.

tion of our ultimate salvation. But, man being fallen, the law steps in with another demand on us, a demand superadded to the former; namely, that we suffer that penalty, which the broken covenant of works denounces against every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. From this penalty, nothing could exempt us, but the substitution of Jesus Christ to bear it in our stead. And, blessed be the riches of his grace, he, who knew no sin, was made sin, a sin-bearer and a sin-offering for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, by his own blood, being made a curse for us. Hence, he averred, that his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins (*a*); and that the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, αντιλυτρον, a substitutionary ransom for many (*b*). In exactly the same point of view does the church consider the nature and efficacy of his atoning blood. "He came," says our fifteenth article, "to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world." She testifies, that God gave his "only Son to be unto us a sacrifice for sin," as well as "an example of godly life (*c*);" and, treating professedly of the "perfect redemption," accomplished by his most precious death, avers, that "there is no other satisfaction for sin, but that alone (*d*)."

VIII. The justification of sinners by his own imputed righteousness, is likewise, a doctrine which Jesus taught. Justification is that gracious act of God, by which he reckons and esteems a person perfectly righteous, and finally rewards him as such. Now, God, whose judgment is alway according to truth (*e*), can never deem any man perfectly righte-

(*a*) Matth. xxvi. 28. (*b*) Ib. xx. 28. (*c*) Collect for the second Sunday after Easter. (*d*) Art. 31. (*e*) Rom. ii. 2.

ous, who is not, in some way or other, possessed of a perfect righteousness. But, all mankind being tainted with original defilement, which even the grace of regeneration does not fully exterminate during the present life; since, in our native state, we are totally sinful, and, in our renewed state, sanctified but in part; it follows, that no man is, in himself, completely righteous. As, therefore, forgiveness of sin can only flow to us through the channel of Christ's imputed sufferings; so, justification, or acceptance with God, can only flow to us through the channel of Christ's imputed obedience.

By imputation, I mean God's graciously placing that to our account, which we did not personally do. Whoever denies the imputation of Christ's sufferings to us men, is a Socinian, in the essential import of the word. And whoever denies the imputation of Christ's own personal obedience, must, to be consistent, deny the imputation of Christ's own personal sufferings. You must admit the imputation of both, or you virtually disallow the imputation of either; for, if it be deemed unreasonable, that God should justify sinners by a righteousness which they themselves did not perform; what will become of that doctrine, which affirms, that sinners are pardoned through a ransom which they themselves did not pay, and by a death which they themselves did not undergo? Explode, therefore, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and we are that instant, in the very gall of Socinianism: for the atonement itself stands on one and the same basis with the other. The language of the moral law is inflexibly this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Do this, and live: but, if thou sin, thou diest. Obey me perfectly, and I pronounce thee justified: break me in any one point, and I pronounce you condemned as guilty of all."

But where is the man (Christ only excepted), who ever did love God with all his heart and strength? where is the person who practically loves his neighbour as himself, and who has never broke the law so much as in one point? Consequently, not a single descendent from Adam can be justified by his own obedience to the moral law. We must, if justified at all, be clothed by imputation, with the obedience of him who alone, strictly speaking, fulfilled all righteousness; or yielded such a conformity to the law, as was perfect in all its parts, and perfect in the highest degree. Hence he directs us to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (*a*): the kingdom of God the Son, as our portion, and an interest in the righteousness of God the Son, as the procuring cause of it. He showed the utter impossibility of being justified by human works, and the absolute necessity of our being clothed with a better righteousness than our own, in those parts of his sermon on the Mount, wherein he explained the spirituality and extent of the moral law. By declaring, that causeless and immoderate anger are murder (*b*), in the estimation of God; that mere concupiscence is adultery, in the eye of uncreated purity; and that even to speak a contemptuous word to our neighbour, brings us, according to the strict tenor of God's perfect law, in danger of hell-fire (*c*); he gives us to understand, that by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified. When our Lord speaks of that wedding garment (*d*), by which we have free access unto the Father; and of that best robe (*e*), in which his repenting people stand faultless before the throne; he means, I dare believe, that righteousness of God incarnate, which is to all and upon all them that believe (*f*). Very express is the decision of the church, concerning this essen-

(*a*) Matth. vi. 33. (*b*) Ib. v. 21, 22. 27, 28. (*c*) Matth. v. 22.
(*d*) Ib. xxii. 11, 12. (*e*) Luke xv. 22. (*f*) Rom. iii. 22.

tial branch of Christian doctrine: "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith; and not for our own works or deservings (*a*)." She lays it down as a most certain truth, that "God made his blessed Son obedient to the law for man (*b*)." She quotes, and adopts, that remark of St. Basil, that "Paul gloried in the contempt of his own righteousness, and that he looked for the righteousness of God by faith (*c*)." Nay, she affirms, in so many words, that "Christ is now the righteousness of all them who truly believe in him. He for them paid their ransom, by his death; he for them fulfilled the law, in his life; so that now, in him and by him, every true Christian man may be called a fulfiller of the law (*d*)." Supported by such positive evidence, I will venture to pronounce, that the man who denies justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, is, in the strictest acceptation of the term, a dissenter from the church of England. Every real member of that church will and does adopt that usual saying of one of its brightest ornaments, "Had I all the faith of the patriarchs, all the zeal of the prophets, all the good works of the apostles, all the holy sufferings of the martyrs, and all the glowing devotion of the seraphs; I would disclaim the whole, in point of dependance, and count all but dross and dung, when compared with the infinitely precious death and the infinitely meritorious righteousness of Jesus Christ my Lord."

IX. The doctrine of effectual vocation and conversion by the influence of insuperable grace, stands high on the list of the doctrines taught by Christ. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me (*e*), or be made to believe in me, to the saving of their souls. The hour is coming, and now is, when the

(*a*) Art. xi. (*b*) Coll. for the Circum. Part 2. (*c*) Hom. of Salva. (*d*) Ibid. Part 1. (*e*) John vi. 37.

dead, the dead in sin, shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and, hearing, they shall live (*a*): live to God below; and live with God, when their spirits return to him that gave them. Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold, who are not within the pale of Judaism; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd (*b*). To the same effect speaks the church: "Wherefore they that be indued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called, according to God's purpose, by his Spirit working in due season (*c*)." Nor can any thing be more truly apostolical, than that solemn caveat, which she enters against the imaginary powers of free-will, in the first part of the homily concerning repentance: "Even so must we beware and take heed, that we do in no wise think in our hearts, imagine, or believe, that we are able to repent aright, or to turn effectually unto the Lord, by our own might and strength. For this must be verified in all men, without me ye can do nothing. Again: of ourselves we are not able so much as to think a good thought. And, in another place, it is God that worketh in us both the will and the deed. For this cause, although Jeremy had said before, If thou return, O Israel, return unto me, saith the Lord; yet, afterwards, he saith, Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. And therefore that ancient writer and holy Father Ambrose, doth plainly affirm, that the turning of the heart unto God is of God: as the Lord himself doth testify by his prophet, saying, And I will give thee an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return to me, with their whole heart."—In her public addresses to God, the

(*a*) Ibid v. 25. *και οι ακουσαντες ζησονται.* (*b*) John x. 16.
(*c*) Art. xvii.

church acknowledges, that it is from him "All holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed (*a*); and that it is he "Who maketh us both to will and to do those things that be good and acceptable to his divine majesty (*b*)."

Inseparable from the grace of effectual calling, are,

X. The sanctifying agency and constant inhabitation of the holy Spirit in the hearts of them that believe.

Cyrus is reported to have said to Crœsus, "The chests, in which I keep my riches, are the hearts and affections of my people." With still greater truth may it be said, that the souls of the regenerate are the repositories, in which God lays up the riches of his grace. His best treasure is in the hearts of his people: for there himself resides. If I depart, said Christ, I will send the comforter unto you; and when he is come, he will convince the world, i. e. the elect, believing world, of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (*c*). He convinces of sin, by making his people sensible of their native unbelief and total sinfulness. He convinces of righteousness, by pointing out to their view, and leading them to rely upon, that vicarious obedience of one, even of Christ, through the imputation of which, many are made righteous (*d*) before God. He convinces of judgment, by turning the soul from dead works, to serve the living and true God. Satan is, as it were, brought to the bar; judged, found guilty of usurpation; and deposed (*e*) from the throne of the con-

(*a*) Daily Evening Service. (*b*) Confirmation Office.
(*c*) John xvi. 8. (*d*) Rom. v. 19.
(*e*) When king Richard II. was deposed by parliament, and the crown adjudged to the duke of Lancaster, what was the consequence? The nation were convinced of judgment: i. e. convinced of the judgment, or sentence of deprivation, which had passed on the former king; and that their allegiance was, from thenceforward, transferred to another sovereign. Much such a revolution, spiritually speaking,

verted sinner's heart: who, from thenceforward, is enabled to live, not to himself, but to the glory of that Saviour who died for him and rose again.

Nor does the blessed Spirit cease to dwell in those who are born again of him. I will pray the Father, and he will give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you (*a*). Nor must we consider this promise as peculiar to the apostles: for the gracious promiser declares, He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water; his consolations shall abound, and the overflowing streams of practical godliness shall enrich and adorn the whole of his conversation: this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive (*b*).

This divine influence, its intrinsic efficacy, and practical effects, are strongly recognized by our national church. She teaches us to pray, that "we, being regenerate, and made the children of God by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by the holy Spirit:" that we may, "by the same Spirit, have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort (*c*)." She describes "godly persons" to be such as "feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the deeds of the flesh, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things (*d*)." She avers, that, by the blessed Spirit of God, "the whole body of the church is governed and sanctified (*e*);" and adopts

ensues in the hearts and lives of those, who, by the energy of renewing grace, are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God.

(*a*) John xiv. 16, 17. (*b*) John vii. 38, 39. (*c*) Coll. for Christmas Day, and for Whitsunday. (*d*) Art. xvii. (*e*) Second Coll. for Good-Friday.

this acknowledgment for her own, "No man can know thy pleasure, except thou givest wisdom, and sendest thy holy Spirit from above. Send him down, therefore, from the holy heavens, and from the throne of thy majesty, that he may be with me, and labour with me, that so I may know what is acacceptable before thee (*a*)." From this government and sanctification of the holy Spirit, proceeds,

XI. That never-failing stream of good works, which Christ so constantly enforced, and which all true believers are so careful to maintain. Every good tree, says our Lord, every soul made good by the grace of God, bringeth forth good fruit (*b*).——Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you (*c*).——He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me (*d*). Nor does the church speak a different language: "Here is now that glass, wherein thou must behold thyself, and discern, whether thou hast the Holy Ghost within thee, or the spirit of the flesh. If thou see that thy works be virtuous and good, consonant to the prescript rule of God's word, savouring and tasting, not of the flesh, but of the spirit; then assure thyself, that thou art endued with the Holy Ghost: otherwise, in thinking well of thyself, thou dost nothing else but deceive thyself (*e*)."

XII. That real sanctification and good works are crowned with the grace of final perseverance, is most expressly taught by Christ. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand (*f*). As for those who fall away from the pro-

(*a*) Hom. for Rogat. part 3. (*b*) Matth. vii. 17. (*c*) John xv. 14.
(*d*) Ib. xiv. 21. (*e*) Hom. for Whitsunday, part 1.
(*f*) John x. 27, 28, 29.

fession they once made, our Lord roundly ascribes it to their having had no root in themselves (*a*): they had the appearance of grace, but not the truth of grace. Hence he will declare, to those on his left hand, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you (*b*): whereas, if any of those that perish had once savingly known him, and been known by him, they might retort, "Yes, Lord, thou didst know us once, and we knew thee, prior to our making shipwreck of salvation." But this will be impossible for any of them to say. Consequently, the doctrine which affirms the perpetuity of grace, stands immoveable on the pillars of infallible truth. No wonder then, that the church should assert, "Christ Jesus, the prophets, the apostles, and all the true ministers of his word; yea, every jot and tittle in the holy scripture; have been, are, and shall be for evermore, the savour of life unto eternal life, unto all those whose hearts God hath purified by true faith (*c*)." Nor does this view of things open (as is falsely affirmed) a door to disobedience and remissness. It no more follows, because a true Christian cannot fall finally from grace, that he may therefore come down from his watch-tower and commit sin with (*d*) safety; than it will follow, that our Lord might have thrown himself from the battlements of the temple, because it was written that God would give

(*a*) Mark iv. 17.

(*b*) Then will I [ὁμολογήσω] solemnly aver unto them, I never [ἀδεποτε] at any time knew you, Matth. vii. 23. That ομολογεω is sometimes rendered by adfirmo, testor, voveo, stands in no need of proof. What a shocking tenet, then, must that be, which affirms the defectibility of real grace, in direct contrariety to that public and solemn asseveration, which Christ himself will make, at the last tremendous audit, in the hearing of angels and men.

(*c*) Hom. on certain places of scripture.

(*d*) "He would be mad indeed," says an ingenious and celebrated writer, "who should wilfully fall down, and break a leg, or an arm, because he knew there was a skilful surgeon at hand to set it." See the Fourth of Five Letters to the Rev. Mr. F. Printed for Dilly, 1771.

his angels charge concerning him to bear him in their hands. And how can it be thought, that this important truth leads to licentiousness, when we lay down this as a fundamental maxim, that none have any shadow of pretence to consider themselves interested in the blessing of perseverance, but those only, who manifest that interest, by being inwardly conformed to God, and outwardly observant of his commandments?

XIII. The doctrine of God's unlimited, particular providence, in the support, government, and direction, of all things without exception, makes an eminent branch of the Christian system, as taught by Christ. We find him thanking his Father, as the Lord of heaven and earth (*a*). We hear him declare, that man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (*b*). Nay, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered (*c*) by him who made them. That it is God who maketh his sun to rise, and rain to descend (*d*): That he feedeth the fowls of the air, and clothes the herbage of the fields (*e*); and, that a single sparrow falleth not to the ground without our Father's (*f*) will and direction. Much less can events of a superior kind, and of still more important consequence, come to pass at random or by accident; witness those words of Christ to Pilate: Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it was given thee from above (*g*). No less peremptory and explicit is the church in her denial of chance, and in her recognition of absolute providence. God, says she, "worketh all things, in his secret judgment, to his own pleasure (*h*)." "Epicures they be, who imagine that he walketh about the coasts of the heavens, and hath no respect of these inferior things, but that all these things

(*a*) Matth. xi. 25. (*b*) Ibid. iv. 4. (*c*) Ibid. x. 30.
(*d*) Ibid. v. 45. (*e*) Ibid. vi. 26—30. (*f*) Ibid. x. 29.
(*g*) John xix. 11. (*h*) Hom. for Rogat. Part 1.

should proceed either by chance, or at adventure, or else by disposition of fortune; and God to have no stroke in them: what other thing is this, than to say, as the fool supposeth in his heart, there is no God (*a*)?" Pursuant to these reflections, she addresses the Supreme Being under the character of him "whose never failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth (*b*)."

XIV. The immortality of the human soul, its separate existence, consciousness, and activity, in a state of detachment from the body; together with its immediate punishment or beatification, as soon as dislodged by death; were all strongly inculcated by the great author of our faith. Fear not them that kill the body, but who are not able to kill the soul (*c*). He preached the same doctrine in his expiring moments, when a cross was his pulpit, and when the conversion of a dying malefactor was the last seal of his ministry: To-day shalt thou, i. e. shall thy soul be with me in paradise (*d*). How clear and forcible is that other declaration of his, God is not the God of the dead, i. e. of the dead only; of the bodies of men, or of that part of man which dies; but of the living: of that also which survives; even their souls: for all live to him (*e*) in the separate state; either glorified as temples of his grace, or punished as monuments of his displeasure. To add but one more testimony: whether we consider the account of Lazarus and the rich man (*f*), as a parable, or a fact; the instantaneous conveyance of the former on angels' wings to Abraham's bosom, and the no less instantaneous punishment of the latter—together with the conversation which passed, or was supposed to pass, between the glorified soul of Abraham, and the tormented soul of the agonizing sinner—plainly

(*a*) Hom. for Rogat. Pt. 2. (*b*) Coll. for the 8th Sunday after Trin.
(*c*) Matth. x. 28. (*d*) Luke xxiii. 43. (*e*) Ib. xx. 38.
(*f*) Ib. xvi.

prove, that the spirit of man is neither extinguished by death, nor reduced to a dormant, insensible state; but either soars directly into the heights of joy, or directly plunges into the abyss of woe. To this, the church subscribes; or she would not pray, "In the hour of death———good Lord, deliver us:" nor give it as her stedfast belief, that "the dead, who die in the Lord, are blessed from henceforth (*a*)," απαρτι, i. e. απο τε νυν, à nunc, from the very instant they expire. In her admirable commendatory prayer, she humbly commits "the soul" of the dying person into the hands of its Creator and Saviour: and in the funeral office, affirms, that "the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are with God in joy and felicity." I am the more particular in citing these testimonies of the church on this subject, as the equally antiscriptural and unphilosophical doctrine of soul-sleeping has, of late, made great progress among some who yet pass for churchmen.

XV. Lastly, The resurrection of the same identical body that dies, and the final glorification (*b*) of

(*a*) Funeral Service, from Rev. xiv. 13.

(*b*) Hence it follows, that heaven must be a place, as well as a state. Which I farther argue thus:

I. It is expressly so termed in holy scripture. I go, says Christ, to prepare a place for you; πορευομαι ἑτοιμασαι ΤΟΠΟΝ ὑμιν. And when I go and shall prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, ινα οπου ειμι εγω, that where (here is the ubi) I am, ye may be also, John xiv. 2, 3. This is several times repeated. Chap. xii. 26. και ΟΠΟΥ ειμι εγω, ΕΚΕΙ και ὁ διακονος ὁ εμος εσαι, and where I am, there also shall the servant, who is mine, be; and chap. xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, ΟΠΟΥ ειμι εγω, where I am; and where is that? In the highest heaven; for it follows, that they may behold my glory: even that glory which he had with the Father, before the world was, ver. 5. And, in Rev. xxii. 5. it is said concerning heaven, νυξ εκ εσαι ΕΚΕΙ, there shall be no night there. Now, setting apart all needless metaphysical distinctions, a place is that, de quo rectè prædicantur ubi et ibi. Whatever has a real existence, must exist some-

the elect in soul and body together, close the rear of that creed which Jesus taught. This is the will

where; according to the old axiom, "quod nullibi est, nihil est:" and that somewhere (be it earth, hell, or heaven) is, to speak intelligibly, the place of the thing or person there existing. It may be said, that "the word place seems not to agree with the nature of spirits." It may not altogether, according to our notion of place; but as I find the Son of God applying the word place to heaven itself, and describing one by the other, I cannot prevail with myself to give up the term place; at least, until I find another more suitable. Shall we exchange it for state? But this is obscurum per obscurius. Suppose a being to be in a certain state or condition, without at the same time taking in the idea of place, or something analogous to it, and we are more in the dark than before. Alicubitus determinata is a circumstance essential to every finite thing that exists: quà ens, it must be alicubi. Sever these two if you can. Ens nullibi is the grossest of absurdities. The word state, refers to a person's greatness or meanness, happiness or misery, knowledge or ignorance, &c. and can a person, or intelligent subsistence, be either great or mean, happy or miserable, i. e. can he be in any state at all, without being at the same time in aliquo ibi? or can the το πως be predicated of one, concerning whom the το που cannot?—Nor is heaven alone termed a place: the region of condemned spirits is likewise so called. Lest they come also into this place of torment, said the departed sensualist, Luke xvi. 28. And Judas is said to have fallen by transgression, that he might go to his own place. Acts i. 25.

II. If heaven be not a place, I would be glad to know where the glorified body of Christ is, with which he ascended. Whither did it ascend to? Where are the bodies of Enoch and Elijah? If in heaven, heaven must be the το ibi, or place, where they are. In short, if we deny the locality of heaven, we must, together with that, deny that Christ resumed his own material body at his resurrection, and that he ascended in it to the right hand of God: i. e. we must commence infidels at once. I would further ask; where will the bodies of the saints be, after the universal judgment? Will they not enter into heaven? and can bodies be in heaven, and heaven not be the place of those bodies? Nay, I ask, whether even the soul of a believer can, after death, be with Christ (which the scripture assures us it is) without ubiety? How, moreover, could Paul, previous to his death, be caught up εως τριτου ουρανου, to the third heaven, or εις τον παραδεισον, into paradise (which two expressions are terms synonymous, as appears by the apostle's reciprocating them, 2 Cor. xii. 2. 4.) and that too, perhaps, εν σωματι, in his body as well as soul; if the third heaven be not a place, or some determinate ibi? What! a man caught up—nowhither? could he

of him who sent me, that, of all which he has given me, I should lose none, but should raise it up again at the last day (*a*). The hour is coming, when all, that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation (*b*). That the church, in these points likewise, is the faithful echo of her master's voice, I need not stay to prove.

Such are the inestimable truths, which the disciples of Arius, Arminius, and Socinus, are labouring to wrest from our hands. How must infidels, on one side, and papists, on the other, exult to see any part (though, blessed be God, it is a very small part indeed) of the established clergy, laying the train, and holding the match, to blow up that very church, of which God and man have conspired to make them the nominal guardians! Adverting to such false brethren, may she not too justly complain, He that eateth my bread layeth great wait for me, and hath lifted up his heel against me? Yea, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table? Considering the quarter, from whence the late application to parliament arose, it may be considered as one of the most abandoned efforts that ever were made: so consummately flagitious, that the very party themselves thought proper to mask the battery, and play it off (as much as they could) in the dark. They published their petition; but took care not to publish their names: though their

go ΕΙΣ *παραδεισον*, into paradise, and that paradise not be local? Place, according to sir Isaac Newton's definition, is pars spatii quam corpus occupat: either, therefore, the bodies of the saints never will be in heaven (which would infer a flat denial of the resurrection); and the body of Christ is not in heaven (which but to imagine, were infidelity indeed); or heaven may be, is, and must be, truly and properly, local. (*a*) John vi. 39. (*b*) Ib. v. 29.

names would not have taken up more room than their petition. Thus, every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved: but he that doth truth, cometh to the light, instead of shrinking from it, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God. Not so wrought was the deed, by which those gentlemen violated their promises to God, trampled on the supremacy of the king, treated the episcopal bench as cyphers, and laboured to destroy the faith they had solemnly engaged to preach.

To say, that "the church would be sufficiently secured by subscribing only to the scriptures at large;" is a mere pretence, far too thin to conceal the cloven foot which lurks beneath. Arians and Socinians profess to believe the Bible. Papists, Arminians, and Pelagians, profess the same. So does every sect, which affects to shelter itself under the name of Christianity. Besides, upon the petitioners' own principles, subscription to the Bible itself would bear quite as hard on some men, as subscription to the liturgy and articles is supposed to do on others. One man may be every whit as sincere in infidelity, as another can be in heterodoxy. And if, in after times, a candidate for holy orders should happen to be an infidel, it would (according to the mode of reasoning adopted by the feathery divines) be full as grievous an encroachment on the right of private judgment, to insist on such a man's subscribing to the scriptures; as it can possibly be, to insist on other people's subscribing to the XXXIX articles. If the exaction of the latter is now cried out against, as an imposition; so, in a short time, would the former. And with full as much reason: for, can it be proved, that God has given heretics a charter of ease, to the exclusion of poor infidels? —The Socinian goes but one step farther than the

Arian; and the Deist goes but one step beyond the Socinian. Is the difference of a single step so very important, that every ecclesiastical door must be thrown wide open, to admit the bible-subscribing Socinian; while the non-subscribing infidel has every door flung in his face, though he stand but a few inches from his admitted neighbour, yea, so near him that their elbows might touch? Would not a Deist, a Mahometan, a Jew, a Pagan, or a Papist, have as much cause, in that case, to exclaim, as an Arian or Socinian pretends to have now? I conclude, therefore, that subscription to the Bible, and subscription to the liturgy, articles, and homilies, stand on one and the same bottom: and the argument, for abolishing subscription to these, would hold with equal force, for the abolition of subscription to that. It is manifest, therefore, to what point the superseding project ultimately tends.

The plain truth seems to be, that the petitioners wish to divest the church of a power, which even a free-mason's club justly possess (I mean the power of expecting conformity to herself, from all whom she admits into her bosom); only that they themselves may sit down to the loaves and fishes, without the trouble of previously saying grace. They want to be supported at the public expence, for doing nothing, and for believing nothing. But, in such a case, would not the wisdom of legislature soon begin to ask this reasonable question, "Why all this waste of tythes and church-lands on a useless body of men?" And would not a speedy resumption of both be the natural consequence? It certainly would, if the legislature were in their senses. Let the petitioners therefore, lay at least this to heart, in due season. If they care not for the doctrines which they have solemnly subscribed; let them, however, take heed to what they confessedly love,

even the bag, and that which is therein (*a*). Though they have no regard to the ark of God, yet let them prudently take some thought for the security of their Diana.

Clergymen of this cast, are very apt to complain of the contempt which is thrown upon them. But is it all surprising, that any who are ritual conformists and avowed doctrinal dissenters, should be disliked for their want of integrity, and despised for their insignificancy? How pertinent, and solemn, are those words of God, by the prophet! The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and men should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law. Mal. ii.

In a letter of Mr. Pope's (if I mistake not), mention is made of an eastern fable, to this effect: The owls and bats once joined, in a petition to Jupiter, against the sun; humbly showing, that his beams were so insufferably troublesome, that the petitioners could not fly abroad with comfort, but were kept prisoners, in their respective recesses, for at least twelve hours out of the twenty-four. Jupiter, seeing Phœbus shortly after, informed him of the application he had received; adding, I shall, however, take no notice of the petition; and be it your business to revenge yourself by shining.

May the sentiment be verified in the clergy of the establishment, at this critical and perilous juncture! Let us be careful to stand in the good old ways, and stedfastly abide by the doctrines of the reforma-

(*a*) John xii. 6.

tion, which are found to quadrate so exactly with the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Be it our care, at once to avenge and heal the wounds of our sacred mother the church, by shining in her defence; by holding forth and holding up the word of life purely, without mixture; meekly, without malevolence, yet intrepidly, without fear or shame; honestly, without self-seeking; fully, without reserve, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; practically (*a*), by giving all diligence to order every part of our own moral demeanor, as becometh the gospel of Christ: giving no just cause of offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on

(*a*) Plato the philosopher, had a nephew (named Speusippus) whose morals were so intolerably dissolute, that his parents discarded him and turned him out of doors. Plato then took him into his own house, to live with him. While there, the amiable philosopher did not endeavour to reclaim him by dry lectures and disgustful expostulations; but strove to make him in love with virtue, by the brightness of his own example. The expedient succeeded.—— Speusippus, at once shamed and charmed by the practical eloquence of his uncle's blameless life, grew reformed on principle, and, afterwards became himself, a very eminent philosopher.—Are we desirous of winning souls to Christ, and of demonstrating ourselves to be children of God? Our exhortations and our profession must have the sanction of our own example; which, more than all the studied oratory in the world; more than all the cold harangues on the "moral fitness of things," and the "beauty and expediency of virtue;" will bring glory to God, honour to the gospel, comfort to our own minds, and solidly edify those to whom we minister and with whom we converse. Thus reasons the apostle Paul: Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest, a man should not steal; dost thou steal? Thou that sayest, a man should not commit adultery; dost thou commit adultery? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? Rom. ii. 21—23.

the left (*b*). That when the destined season arrives, at which we must give account of our stewardship to the great shepherd and bishop of souls, we may be found of him in peace; watching, praying, labouring; and ascend from our Master's work, to our Master's joy, as Cincinnatus was found busy at his plough, when called to the dictatorship of Rome.

(*b*) 2 Cor. vi. 3—7.

# SERMON VI.

## FREE-WILL AND MERIT FAIRLY EXAMINED:

OR,

## MEN NOT THEIR OWN SAVIOURS.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A

## DISCOURSE

PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. ANN, BLACK-FRIARS.

ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 25th, 1774.

Truly, in vain is Salvation hoped for from the hills and from the multitude of mountains. Truly, in the Lord our God is the Salvation of Israel.—JER. iii. 33.

# SERMON VI.

PSALM CXV. 1.

*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory; for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*

SOME expositors have supposed, that this Psalm was penned by the prophet Daniel; on occasion of the miraculous deliverance of Shadrac, Meshac, and Abednego, when they came out unhurt, from the burning fiery furnace, into which they had been thrown by the command of king Nebuchadnezzar.

And indeed there are not wanting passages in the Psalm itself, which seem to countenance this conjecture. As where we read at the 4th verse (speaking of the idols of the heathens, and perhaps with particular reference to that golden image which Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be worshipped), their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands: they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not.

I dare say, that in such an auditory as this, a number of Arminians are present. I fear that all our public assemblies have too many of them. Perhaps, however, even these people, idolaters as they are, may be apt to blame, and indeed with justice, the absurdity of those who worship idols of silver and gold, the work of men's hands. But let me ask, If it be so very absurd to worship the work of other men's hands; what must it be to worship the works of our own hands? Perhaps you may say, "God forbid that I should do so." Nevertheless, let me tell you, that trust, confidence, reliance, and de-

pendence for salvation, are all acts, and very solemn ones too, of divine worship: and upon whatsoever you depend, whether in whole, or in part, for your acceptance with God, and for your justification in his sight; whatsoever you rely upon, and trust in, for the attainment of grace or glory; if it be any thing short of God in Christ, you are an idolater to all intents and purposes.

Very different is the idea, which scripture gives us, of the ever-blessed God, from that of those false gods worshipped by the heathens; and from that degrading representation of the true God, which Arminianism would palm upon mankind. Our God (says this Psalm, verse the 3d) is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased. This is not the (*a*)

(*a*) I was lately introduced to the acquaintance of a very learned and sensible Arminian, whose political writings, and whose social virtues, entitle him to no small share of public and domestic esteem. This worthy gentleman has sagacity to perceive, and integrity to acknowledge, the prodigious lengths to which the free-will scheme, if carried as far as it naturally leads, must inevitably push its votaries. He sees its consequences clearly; he swallows them without difficulty; and he avows them very honestly.

"God does all he possibly can" [these were the gentleman's own words to me, in conversation] "God does all he possibly can, to hinder moral and natural evil; but he cannot prevail. Men will not permit God to have his wish."—Then, said I, the Deity must certainly be a very unhappy Being.—"Not unhappy in the least," replied the ready philosopher: God knows, that in consequence of the free-will with which he has endued his rational creatures, he himself must be disappointed of his wishes, and defeated of his ends, and that there is no help for it, unless he had made us mere machines. He, therefore, submits to necessity; and does not make himself uneasy about it."

See on what tremendous shoals, free-willers, when honest, run themselves aground! Is their god the Bible-God? Certainly not. Their god "submits" to difficulties which he "cannot help" himself out of, and endeavours to make himself "easy" under millions and millions of inextricable embarrassments, uncomfortable disappointments, and mortifying defeats. Whereas, concerning the God of the Bible, it is affirmed, that he hath done, and will always continue to do, whatsoever he pleaseth.

Observe, reader, the piety, and the consistency, of the free-will scheme.—This said scheme ascends on the ladder of blasphemy, to

Arminian idea of God: for our free-willers and our chance-mongers tell us, that God does not do whatsoever he pleases; that there are a great number of things, which God wishes to do, and tugs and strives to do, and yet cannot bring to pass: they tell us, as one ingeniously expresses it,

> "That all mankind he fain would save,
> But longs for what he cannot have.
> Industrious, thus, to sound abroad,
> A disappointed, changing God."

How does this comport with that majestic description, Our God is in the heavens! He sits upon the throne, weighing out, and dispensing the fates of men; holding all events in his own hand; and guiding every link of every chain of second causes, from the beginning to the end of time. Our God is in heaven, possessed of all power; and (which is the natural consequence of that) he hath done whatsoever he pleased: or, as the apostle expresses it, (the words are different, but the sense is the same) he (*a*) worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Therefore it is, that we both labour and suffer reproach; even because we say (and the utmost we can say upon the subject, amounts to no more than this: to wit, that) our God is in heaven, and has done whatsoever pleased him. And do according

the mountain top of atheism; and then hurls itself from that precipice, into the gulph of blind, adamantine necessity, in order to prove mankind free agents!

My interview with the philosopher abovementioned (whom, by the way, I most heartily acquit of all intentional atheism, or even disrespect to the Supreme Being), was seasoned with so many curious and uncommon circumstances of free debate, that my respectable and invaluable friend, the Reverend Mr. Ryland, senior, of Northampton (who was present the whole time), acknowledged, after we had taken our leave of the worthy gentleman, that the said philosophic politician is a very honest, and, consequently, a very unusual phænomenon.

(*a*) Eph. i. 11.

to his own sovereign pleasure he will, to the end of the chapter; though all the Arminians upon earth were to endeavour to defeat the divine intention and to clog the wheels of divine government. He that sits in heaven (*a*), laughs them to scorn; and brings his own purposes to pass, sometimes, even through the means of those very incidents, which evil men endeavour to throw in his way, with a mad view to disappoint him of his purposes. All things, saith the Psalmist, serve thee (*b*): they have all a direct tendency, either effectively or permissively, to carry on his unalterable designs of providence and grace. Observe, effectively, or permissively. For we never say, nor mean to say, that God is the worker of evil: we only maintain, that for reasons unknown to us, but well known to God, he is the efficacious permitter (not the (*c*) agent, but the permitter) of whatsoever comes to pass. But when we talk of good, we then enlarge the term; and affirm, with the Psalmist, that all the help [i. e. all the good] that is done upon earth, God does it himself (*d*).

I remember a saying of the great Monsieur Du Moulin, in his admirable book, entitled, Anatome Arminianismi. His observation is, that the wicked, no less than the elect, accomplish the wise and holy and just decrees of God: but, says he, with this difference; God's own people, after they are converted, endeavour to do his will from a principle of love: whereas they who are left to the perverseness of their

(*a*) Psalm ii. 4. (*b*) Psalm cxix. 91. Liturgy Version.

(*c*) To say, that the doctrine of predestination makes God the author and actuator of sin, is one of the most daring, (and at the same time) most irrational cavils, that ever dishonoured Arminianism itself. The state of the matter stands thus.—Since the fall of Adam and his sons (an event, the divine motives to the permission of which, we are not entitled to know), God need only leave men to themselves by withholding the restraints of grace and providence; and men's corrupt free-agency will, of itself, carry them headlong into all evil.

(*d*) Psalm lxxiv. 13.

own hearts (which is all the reprobation we contend for), who care not for God, nor is God in all their thoughts; these persons resemble men rowing in a boat, who make toward the very place, on which they turn their backs (*a*). They turn their backs on the decree of God; and yet make to that very point, without knowing it.

One great contest between the religion of Arminius, and the religion of Jesus Christ, is, who shall stand entitled to the praise and glory of a sinner's salvation? Conversion decides this point at once: for I think, that, without any imputation of uncharitableness, I may venture to say, that every truly awakened person, at least when he is under the shine of God's countenance upon his soul, will fall down upon his knees, with this hymn of praise ascending from his heart, Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to thy name, give the glory: I am saved, not for my righteousness, but for thy mercy and thy truth's sake.

And this holds true even as to the blessings of the life that now is. It is God that sets up one, and puts down another (*b*). Victory, for instance, when contending princes wage war, is all of God. The race is not to the swift, as swift; nor the battle to the strong, as such (*c*). It is the decree, the will, the power, the providence of God, which effectually, though sometimes invisibly, order and dispose of every event.

(*a*) The same great reasoner observes, that "God overrules even the follies of mankind, to the purposes of his own infinite wisdom; and makes use of wicked men themselves, to execute his own righteous views: just as a person may draw a strait line, or give a right blow, with a crooked stick."——Illi ipsi, qui resistunt mandato Dei serviunt ejus Providentiæ: et, remigum instar eò tendunt, quò obvertunt terga. Deus, per insipientiam hominum, perficit consilia suæ sapientiæ. Utitur hominibus injustis, ad excercendam suam justitiam. Non secus, ac si quis, obtor to baculo, rectum ictum infligat. Molinæi Anat. Arm. cap. 3. p. 17.—Edit. Ludg. 1619.

(*b*) Psalm lxxv. 7. (*c*) Eccl. ix. 11.

At the famous battle of Azincourt, in France, where, if I mistake not, 80,000 French were totally defeated by about 9000 English, under the command of our immortal king Henry V.; after the great business of the day was over, and God had given that renowned prince the victory, he ordered the foregoing Psalm (that is, the 114th), and part of this Psalm from whence I have read you the passage now under consideration, to be sung in the field of battle; by way of acknowledging, that all success, and all blessings, of what kind soever, come down from the Father of lights. Some of our historians acquaint us, that, when the triumphant English came to those words which I have taken for my text, the whole victorious army fell down upon their knees, as one man, in the field of conquest; and shouted with one heart, and with one voice, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name, give the glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

And thus will it be, when God has accomplished the number of his elect, and completely gathered in the fulness of his redeemed kingdom. What, do you think, your song will be, when you come to heaven? Blessed be God, that he gave me free-will; and blessed be my own dear self, that I made a good use of it? O no, no. Such a song as that was never heard in heaven yet, nor ever will, while God is God and heaven is heaven. Look into the Book of Revelation, and there you will find the employ of the blessed, and the strains in which they sing. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation (*a*). There is discriminating grace for you! Thou hast redeemed us out of every kindred, &c. that is, from (*b*) among

(*a*) Rev. iv. 10. (*b*) Rev. xiv. 4.

the rest of mankind. Is not this particular election, and limited redemption?

The church below may be liable to err: and if any visible church upon earth pretends to be infallible, the very pretension itself demonstrates that she is not so. But there is a church, which I will venture to pronounce infallible. And what church is that? The church of the glorified who shine as stars at God's right hand. And, upon the infallible testimony of that infallible church; a testimony, recorded in the infallible pages of inspiration; I will venture to assert, that not one grain of Arminianism ever attended a saint into heaven.—If those of God's people, who are in the bonds of that iniquity, are not explicitly converted from it, while they live and converse among men; yet do they leave it all behind them in Jordan (i. e. in the river of death) when they go through. They may be compared to Paul, when he went from Jerusalem to Damascus, and the grace of God struck him down: he fell, a free-willer; but he rose a free-gracer. So, however the rust of self-righteous pride (and a cursed rust it is: may God's Spirit file it off from all our souls) however that rust may adhere to us at present; yet, when we come to stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, it will be all done away, and we shall sing in one full, everlasting chorus, with elect angels and elect men, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us.

And why should not we sing that song now? Why should not we endeavour, under the influence of the spirit, to anticipate the language of the skies, and be as heavenly as we can, before we get to heaven? Why should we contemn that song, upon earth; which we hope for ever to sing, before the throne of God above? It is to me, really astonishing, that protestants, and church of England men, considered merely as rational creatures, and as people of common sense, who profess to be acquainted with the scriptures, and to acknowledge the power

of God, should have any objection to singing this song, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.

Still more wonderful and deplorable it is, that some, who even make profession of spiritual religion, and talk of an inward work of God upon their hearts, should so far lose sight of humility and of truth, as to dream, either that their own arm helped the Almighty to save them, or at least that their own arm was able to have hindered him from saving them. What can reflect deeper dishonour upon God, than such an idea? And what can have a directer tendency to engender and to nourish that pride of heart which deceiveth man?

It pleased God to deliver me from the Arminian snare, before I was quite eighteen. Antecedently to that period, there was not (with the lowest self-abasement I confess it) a more haughty and violent free-willer, within the compass of the four seas. One instance of my warm and bitter zeal, occurs just now to my memory. About a twelvemonth before the divine goodness gave me eyes to discern, and an heart to embrace the truth, I was haranguing one day in company (for I deemed myself able to cope with all the predestinarians in the world), on the universality of grace, and the powers of human free-agency. A good old gentleman (now with God) rose from his chair, and, coming to mine, held me by one of my coat-buttons, while he mildly addressed me to this effect: My dear sir, there are some marks of spirituality in your conversation; though tinged with an unhappy mixture of pride and self-righteousness. You have been speaking largely in favour of free-will: but, from arguments, let us come to experience. Do let me ask you one question. How was it with you, when the Lord laid hold on you in effectual calling? Had you any hand in obtaining that grace? Nay, would you not

have resisted and baffled it, if God's Spirit had left you in the hand of your own counsel?

I felt the conclusiveness of these simple, but forcible interrogations, more strongly than I was then willing to acknowledge. But, blessed be God, I have since been enabled to acknowledge the freeness and omnipotence of his grace, times without number; and to sing (what I trust will be my everlasting song when time shall be no more), Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy name, give all the glory.

We never know so much of heaven in our own souls, nor stand so high upon the mount of communion with God, as when his Spirit, breathing on our hearts, makes us lie low at the footstool of sovereign grace, and inspires us with this cry, O God, be mine the comfort of salvation, but thine be the entire praise of it.

Let us briefly apply the rule and compass of God's word, to the several parts, of which salvation is composed; and we shall soon perceive that the whole building is made up of grace, and of grace alone. Do you ask, in what sense I here take the word grace? I mean, by that important term, the voluntary, sovereign, and gratuitous bounty of God; quite unconditionated by, and quite irrespective of, all and every shadow of human worthiness, whether antecedaneous, concomitant, or subsequent. This is, precisely, the scriptural idea of grace: to wit, that it [i. e. salvation in all its branches] is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, who showeth mercy (*a*). And thus it is, that grace reigneth, unto the eternal life of sinners, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord (*b*).

1. In canvassing this momentous truth, let us begin where God himself began: namely, with election. To whom are we indebted, for that first

(*a*) Rom. ix. 16. (*b*) Rom. v. 21.

of all spiritual blessings? Pride says, to me. Self-righteousness says, to me. Man's unconverted will says, to me. But faith joins with God's word in saying, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name, be the whole glory of thy electing love ascribed: thou didst not choose us, on supposition of our first choosing thee; but, through the victorious operation of thy mighty Spirit, we choose thee for our portion and our God, in consequence of thy having first and freely chosen us to be thy people.

Hear the testimony of that apostle, who received the finishings of his spiritual education in the third heavens. There is a remnant, says he, according to the election of grace. And, if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it [i. e. if election] be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise, work is no more work (*a*). Let us sift this reasoning; and we shall find it invincible.

There is "a remnant," i. e. some of fallen mankind, who shall be everlastingly saved through Christ. This remnant is "according to election:" God's own will and choice are the determinate rule, by which the saved remnant is measured and numbered. This election is an election of "grace," or a free, sovereign, and unmerited act of God. The apostle would not leave out the word grace, lest people should imagine that God elected them on account of something he saw in them above others.—"Well, but" (may some say) "admitting election to be by grace, might not our foreseen good works have a little hand in the matter? might not God have some small regard to our future good behaviour?" No, answers the apostle: none at all. If election be by "grace," i. e. of mere mercy, and sovereign love; then it is no more of "works," whether directly or indirectly, in whole or in part; "otherwise, grace

(*a*) Rom. xi. 5, 6.

is no more grace:" Could any thing human, though ever so little, be mixed with grace, as a motive with God for showing favour to Peter (for instance) above Judas; grace would all evaporate, and be annihilated, from that moment. For, as Austin observes, Gratia non est gratia, nisi sit omninò gratuita: Grace ceases to be grace, unless it be totally and absolutely irrespective of any thing and of every thing, whether good or bad, in the objects of it. So that, as the apostle adds, was it possible for election to be "of works," then would it be "no more" an act of "grace;" but a payment, instead of a gift; "otherwise, work were no more work." On one hand, "work" ceases to be considered as influential on election, if election is the daughter of "grace;" and, on the other hand, "grace" has nothing at all to do in election, if "works" have any concern in it. Grace and conditionality, are two incompatible opposites; the one totally destroys the other; and they can no more subsist together, than two particles of matter can occupy the same individual portion of space at the same point of time.

Which, therefore, of these contrary songs, do you sing? (for all the art and labour of mankind united, can never throw the two songs into one) Are you for burning incense to yourselves, saying, Our righteousness, and the might of our own arm, have gotten us this spiritual wealth?—Or, with the angels and saints in light, do you lay down your brightest honours at the footstool of God's throne? with Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory, for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

Certainly, election is the act, not of man, but of God; founded merely upon the sovereign and gracious pleasure of his own will. It is not of works, lest any man should boast; but solely of him, who has said, I will be merciful to whom I

will be merciful, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. God merits of us, not we of him; and it was his free-will, not ours, which drew the impassable line between the elect and the pretermitted.

2. God's covenant love to us in Christ is another stream, flowing from the fountain of unmingled grace. And here, as in the preceding instance, every truly awakened person disclaims all title to praise; shoves it away from himself, with both hands; and not only with his hands, but with his heart also; while his lips acknowledge, Not unto us, O thou divine and co-eternal Three, not unto us, but to thy name, give glory!

How is it possible, that either God's purposes, or that his covenant concerning us, can be, in any respect whatever, suspended on the will or the works of men; seeing, both his purposes and his covenant were framed, and fixed, and agreed upon, by the persons in the Trinity, not only before men existed, but before angels themselves were created, or time itself was born? All was vast eternity, when grace was fœderally given us in Christ ere the world began (*a*): well therefore might the apostle, in the very text where he makes the above assertion, observe, that the holy calling, with which God effectually converts and sanctifies his people, in time, is bestowed upon us, not according to our works, but according to God's own free purpose and eternal destination.

Repentance and faith, new obedience and perseverance, are not conditions of interest in the covenant of grace (for then would it be a covenant of works); but consequences, and tokens, of covenant interest. For, the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God, according to election (which is the

(*a*) 2 Tim. i. 9.

standard of covenant-mercy) might remain (*a*) unshaken, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated (*b*). Now, whether you consider this passage as referring to the posterity of Jacob and Esau, or to Jacob and Esau themselves, or (which is evidently the apostle's meaning) as referring to both; the argument will still come to the same point at last; namely, that the divine counsels and determinations, in whatever view you take them, are absolutely irrespective of works, because God's immanent decrees and covenant-transactions took place, before the objects of them had done either good or evil. Of course, all the good that is wrought in men, comes from God, as the gracious effect, not as the cause, of his favour; and all the evil which God permits (such are his wisdom and his power) is subservient to promote, instead of interfering to obstruct, the accomplishment of his most holy will. I mention God's permission of evil, only incidentally in this place; for, properly, it belongs to another argument. My present business is to show, that the good, and the graces, which God works (not permissively, but effectively) in the hearts of his covenant people, are the fruit, not the root, of the love he bears to them.

3. To whom are we indebted for the atonement of Christ, and for redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins? Here likewise, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us! It was God who found a ransom (*c*). It was God who provided his own justice with a lamb for a burnt-offering. It was God who accepted the atonement at our surety's hand, instead of ours. It was God who freely imparts the blessings of that completely finished redemption, to the comfort, and everlasting restoration of all those who are enabled to trust and to

(*a*) μενη. (*b*) Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13. (*c*) Job xxxiii. 24.

glory in the cross of Christ. Against such persons, divine justice has nothing to allege: and on them it has no penalty to inflict. The sword of vengeance, having been already sheathed in the sinless human nature of Jehovah's equal (*a*), becomes, to them that believe, a curtana, a sword of mercy, a sword without a point. Thanks to the reconciling mercy of God the Father, and to the bleeding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Human free-will and merit had nothing to do in the matter, from first to last.

4. As pardon exempts us from punishment, so justification (i. e. God's acceptance of us as perfect fulfillers of the whole law) entitles us to the kingdom of heaven. The former is God's παρεσις (*b*), or passing by of our transgressions, so as not to take notice of them; and God's αφεσις (*c*), or letting us go finally unpunished. But justification (which is the inseparable concomitant of forgiveness) is not merely negative, but carries in it more of positivity, and exalts us to an higher state of felicity, than mere pardon (was it possible to be conferred without justification) would do. It is God's δικαιωσις, or pronouncing of us positively and actually just: not only innocent, but righteous also. St. Bernard, somewhere, preserves this obvious and just distinction.—His words, I remember, are, that God is tâm validus ad justificandum, quàm multus ad ignoscendum: "No less mighty to justify, than rich in mercy to forgive."

Now the great inquiry is, whether God be indeed entitled to the whole praise of this unspeakable gift? Whether we should, as justified persons, sing to the praise and glory of ourselves; or to the praise and glory of God alone?

The Bible will determine this question, in a moment; and show us, that Father, Son, and Spirit,

(*a*) Zech. xiii. 7. (*b*) Rom. iii. 25. (*c*) Matth. xxvi. 28.

are the sole authors, and, consequently, should receive the entire glory of our justification.

It is God [the Father] who justifieth (*a*); i. e. who accepts of us unto eternal life; and that freely, by his grace (*b*), through the redemption which is in Christ, and through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, without works (*c*): i. e. without being moved to it by any consideration of the good works, and without being restrained from it by any consideration of the evil works, wrought by the person or persons to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed, and who are pronounced just in consequence of that imputed righteousness.

Justification is also the act of God the Son, in concurrence with his Father. St. Paul expressly declares, that he sought to be justified by Christ (*d*). The second person in the divinity joins, as such, in accepting of his people, through that transferred merit, which, as man, he wrought for this very end. Now, let me ask you, did you assist Christ in paying the price of your redemption, and in accomplishing a series of perfect obedience, for your justification? If you did, you are entitled to a proportionable part of the praise. But, if Christ both obeyed and died, and rose again, without your assistance, it invincibly follows, that you have no manner of claim to the least particle of that praise, which results from the benefits acquired and secured by his obedience, death, and resurrection. The benefits themselves are all your own, if he give you faith to embrace them; but the honour, the glory, and the thanks, you cannot arrogate to yourself, without the utmost impiety and sacrilege.

God the Holy Ghost unites in justifying the redeemed of the Lord. We are declaratively and evidentially, justified by the Spirit of our God (*e*):

(*a*) Rom. viii. 33. (*b*) Ib. iii. 24. (*c*) Ib. iv. 6. (*d*) Gal. ii. 17. (*e*) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

whose condescending and endearing office it is, to reveal a broken Saviour in the broken heart of a self-emptied sinner, and to shed abroad the justifying love of God in the human soul (*a*). Herein the adorable Spirit neither needs, nor receives, any assistance from the sinners he visits. His gracious influence is sovereign, free, and independent. We can no more command, or prohibit, his agency, than we can command, or forbid, the shining of the sun.

The conclusion from the whole is; that not our goodness, but God's mercy; not our obedience, but Christ's righteousness; not our towardliness, but the holy Spirit's beneficence; are to be thanked, for the whole of our justification.

And it is no easy lesson, to say from the heart, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us! Self-righteousness cleaves to us, as naturally, and as closely, as our skins: nor can any power, but that of an Almighty hand, flay us of it. I remember an instance, full to the point; and which I give, on the authority of a clergyman, now living, and eminent above many, for his labours and usefulness. This worthy person assured me, a year or two since, that he once visited a criminal, who was under sentence of death, for a capital offence (I think for murder). My friend endeavoured to set before him the evil he had done; and to convince him, that he was lost and ruined, unless Christ saved him by his blood, righteousness and grace. "I am not much concerned about that," answered the self-righteous malefactor; "I have not, to be sure, led so good a life as some have; but I am certain, that many have gone to Tyburn, who were much worse men than myself." So you see, a murderer may go to the gallows, trusting in his own righteousness! And you and I should have gone to hell, trusting in our own righteousness, if Christ had not stopt us by the way.

(*a*) Rom. v. 5.

I dare believe, that the above-mentioned criminal, had the subject been started, would also have valued himself upon his free agency. Free agency, it is true, he had; and he was left to the power of it, and ruined himself accordingly. Free-will has carried many a man to Tyburn, and (it is to be feared) from Tyburn to hell: but it never yet carried a single soul to holiness and heaven. Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; free-will can do that for us; but in me, says God, is thy help (*a*). His free grace must be our refuge and our shelter from our own free-will; or it were good for the best of us that we had never been born (*b*).

In one word, all the glory of our pardon and justification belongs to the Trinity, and not to man. It is one of God's crown-jewels, unalienable from himself; and which he will never resign to, nor share with, any other being. It is impossible, in the very nature of things, that he ever should: for, how can any of depraved mankind be justified by works (and without being so justified, we can come in for no part of the praise); how, I say, can any of us be justified by our own doings, seeing we

(*a*) Hosea xiii. 9.

(*b*) I have heard, or read, concerning that excellent dignitary of the church of England, Mr. John Bradford (who was also burned for adhering to her doctrines), that, one day, on seeing a malefactor pass to execution, he laid his hand to his breast, and lifted his eyes to heaven, saying, "Take away the grace of God, and there goes John Bradford."

The great and good St. Austin, long before, offered a similar acknowledgment to God. Semper gratia tua et misericordia tua prævenit me:——præcidens etiam ante me laqueos peccatorum; tollens occasiones et causas. Quia, nisi tu hoc mihi fecisses, omnia peccata mundi fecissem. Quoniam scio, Domine, quòd nullum peccatum est, quod unquam fecerat homo, quod non possit facere alter homo, si creator desit, à quo factus est homo.—Soliloqu. cap. xv. sect. 5.

So likewise thought the author (whose name I forgot) of that tender and beautiful line:

Aut sumus, aut fuimus, vel possumus esse, quod hic est.

are utterly unable even to think a good thought (*a*), until God himself breathes it into our hearts?

Suffer me to observe one thing more, under this article: viz. that, if God's Spirit has stript you of your own righteousness, he has not stript you in order to leave you naked, but will clothe you with change of raiment (*b*). He will give you a robe for your rags; the righteousness of God, for the rotten righteousness of man. Rotten indeed we shall find it, if we make it a pillar of confidence. I will say of it, as Dr. Young says of the world, "Lean not upon it;" lean not on thy own righteousness; if leaned upon, "it will pierce thee to the heart: at best, a broken reed; but oft a spear. On its sharp point, peace bleeds and hope expires."

Self reliance is the very bond of unbelief. It is essential infidelity, and one of its most deadly branches. You are an infidel, if you trust in your own righteousness. You a Christian? You a churchman? No; you have, in the sight of God, neither part nor lot in the matter. You are spiritually dead, while you pretend to live. Until you are indued with faith in Christ's righteousness, your body, (as a great man expresses it) is no better than "the living coffin of a dead soul." A Christian is a believer (not in himself, but) in Christ. And what is the language of a believer? Lord, I am, in myself, a poor, ruined, undone sinner. Through the hand of thy good Spirit upon me, I throw myself at the foot of thy cross; and look to thee for blood to wash me, for righteousness to justify me, for grace to make me

(*a*) 2 Cor. iii. 5.—In perfect harmony with this most important truth, our church thus addresses the Majesty of heaven: O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed. And, again; Grant, that, by thy holy inspiration, we may think those things that be good.—O free-will, free-will! at how low a rate wast thou estimated by the reformers and the ancient bishops of the church of England! (*b*) Zech. iii. 4.

holy, for comfort to make me happy, and for strength to keep me in thy ways.

5. For holiness, the inward principle of good works; and for good works, themselves, the outward evidences of inward holiness; we are obliged to the alone grace and power of God most high. We do not make him a debtor to us, by loving and performing his commandments; but we become, additionally, debtors to him, for crowning his other gifts of grace, by vouchsafing to work in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight (*a*).

Say not, "Upon this plan, sanctification is kicked out of doors, and good works are turned adrift." Nothing can be more palpable and flagrantly untrue. Newness of heart and of life is so essential to, and constitutes so vast a part of, the evangelical scheme of salvation, that, were it possible for holiness and its moral fruits to be really struck out of the account, the chain would at once dissolve, and the whole fabric become an house of sand.

The Arminians have of late made a huge cry about "Antinomians! Antinomians!" From the abundance of experience, the mouth is apt to speak. The modern (*b*) Arminians see so much real Antinomianism among themselves, and in their own tents, that Antinomianism is become the predominant idea, and the favourite watch-word, of the party. Because they have got the plague, they think every body else has. Because the leprosy is in their walls, they imagine no house is without it. Thus,

*All looks infected, that th' infected spy;*
*As all seems yellow, to the jaundiced eye.*

(*a*) Heb. xiii. 21.

(*b*) Let it be observed, that I do not, here, and in the following strictures, speak of all Arminians, without exception: but of such Arminians, who come within a certain denomination; and who are no less eminent for their boisterous brawling about works, than (as I can prove from too many instances which have fallen under my own notice) for their practical adoption of bad ones

It is cunning, I must confess, in these people, to raise a dust, for their own defence; and, like some pick-pockets when closely pursued, to aim at slipping the stolen watch or handkerchief into the pocket of an innocent bye-stander, that the real sharper may elude the rod of justice. But unhappily for themselves, the Arminians are not complete masters of this art. The dust they raise, forms too thin a cloud to conceal them: and their bungling attempt, to shift off the charge of Antinomianism upon others, rivets the charge but more firmly on themselves its true proprietors. The avowed effrontery, with which they openly trample on a certain commandment that says, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; may stand as a sample of the little regard they pay to the other nine. Pretty people these, to look for justification from the "merit" of their own works, and to value themselves on their "perfect love to God and man!"

With regard to sanctification and obedience, truly so called; it can only flow, and cannot but flow, from a new heart: which new heart is of God's own making, and of God's own giving. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; a soft, repenting, believing heart; and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them (*a*). Now, God accomplishes this promise, by the effectual working of his blessed Spirit: by the mystic fire of whose agency having melted our hearts into penitential faith, he then applies to them the seal of his own holiness; from which time, we begin to bear the image and superscription of God upon our tempers, words, and actions.

This is our "licentious" doctrine: namely, a doctrine which (under the influence of the Holy Ghost) conforms the soul, more and more, to God:

(*a*) Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

carefully referring, at the same time, all the praise of this active and passive conformity, to God himself, whose gift it is; singing, with the saints of old, Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our [good] works in us (*a*); and, for all the works so wrought,—for the will to please thee, for the endeavour to please thee, for the ability to please thee, and for every act whereby we do please thee.—Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.

And, indeed, was not this the truth of the case, i. e. if conversion and sanctification and good works were not God's gifts, and of his operation; men would have not only somewhat, but much, even very much, to boast of: for they would be their own converters, sanctifiers, and saviours. Directly contrary to the plain letter of scripture, which asks, Who maketh thee to differ from others, and what hast thou, which thou didst not receive (*b*) from above? Nor less contrary to the scriptural direction, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord (*c*).

6. Once more. Whom are we to thank for perseverance in holiness and good works to the end? "Oh," says an old Pharisee, perhaps, "the thanks are due to my own watchfulness, my own faithfulness, my own industry, and my own improvements." Your supposed watchfulness answers a very bad purpose, if you make a merit of it. The enemy of souls cares not the turning of a straw, whether you perish by open licentiousness, or by a delusive confidence in your own imaginary righteousness. It is all one to him, whether you go to hell in a black coat, or a white one. Nay, the whitest you can weave, will be found black, and a mere san benito to equip you for the flames, if God does not array you in the imputed righteousness of his blessed Son.

But, for the present, leaving Pharisees and legalists to the hands of him who alone is able, and

(*a*) Isai. xxvi. 12. (*b*) 1 Cor. iv. 7. (*c*) Ibid. i. 31.

has a right to save or to destroy; let me address myself to the true believer in Christ. You were called, it may be ten or twenty years ago, or longer, to the knowledge of God; and you still are found, dwelling under the droopings of the sanctuary, and walking in him you have received; following on, to know more of the Lord; sometimes faint, yet always wishing to pursue; tossed, but not lost; occasionally cast down, but not destroyed. How comes all this? How is it, that many flaming professors, who blazed out for a while, like luminaries of the first lustre, are quenched, extinguished, vanished; while your smoking flax, and feeble spark of grace, continue to survive, and sometimes afford both light and heat? While more than a few, who perhaps once seemed to be rooted as rocks, and stable as pillars in the house of God, are become as water that runneth apace; why are you standing, though in yourself, as weak, if not weaker than they? A child of God can soon answer this question. And he will answer it thus: Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day (*a*). Not by my own might and power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts (*b*).

And he that kept you until this day, will keep you all your days. His Spirit, which he freely gives to his people, is a well of water, springing up, not for a year, nor for a life-time only; but into everlasting life (*c*). God's faithfulness to you is the source of your faithfulness to him. Christ prays for you; and therefore he keeps you watching unto prayer. He preserves you from falling; or, when fallen, he restores your soul, and leads you forth again in the path of righteousness, for his name's sake. He has decreed, and covenanted, and promised, and sworn, to give you a crown of life; and, in order to that, he has no less solemnly engaged

(*a*) Acts xxvi. 22. (*b*) Zech. iv. 6. (*c*) John iv. 14.

and irrevocably bound himself, to make you faithful unto death.

"Well, then," says an Arminian, "if these things are so, I am safe at all events. I may fold up my arms, and even lay me down to sleep. Or, if I choose to rise and be active, I may live just as I list." Satan was the coiner of this reasoning; and he offered it, as current and sterling, to the Messiah; but Christ rejected it as false money.—If thou be the son of God, said the enemy; if thou be indeed that Messiah whom God upholds, and his elect, in whom his soul delighteth, cast thyself headlong; it is impossible thou shouldst perish, do what thou wilt; no fall can hurt thee; and thy father has absolutely promised, that his angels shall keep thee in all thy ways; jump therefore, boldly, from the battlements, and fear no evil.

The devil's argumentation was equally insolent and absurd, in every point of view. He reasoned, not like a serpent in his wits, but like a serpent whose head was bruised (*a*), and who had no more of understanding than of modesty. Christ silenced this battery of straw, with a single sentence: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (*b*). So said the Messiah. And so say we. And this is answer enough, to a cavil, whose palpable irrationality would cut its own throat, without the help of any answer at all.

God's children would be very glad, if they could "live as they list." How so? Because it is the will, the desire, the wish, of a renewed soul (i. e. of the new man, or the believer's regenerate part; for old Adam never was a saint yet, nor ever will be); it is, I say, the will and the wish of a renewed soul, to please God in all things, and never to sin, on any occasion, or in any degree. This is the state, to which our pantings aspire; and in which (would the imperfection of human nature admit of such hap-

(*a*) Gen. iii. 15. (*b*) Matth. iv. 6, 7.

piness below) we "list" to walk. For every truly regenerated person can sincerely join the apostle Paul, in saying, With my mind I myself serve the law of God (*a*), and wish I could keep it better.

God's preservation is the good man's perseverance. He will keep the feet of his saints (*b*). Arminianism represents God's Spirit, as if he acted like the guard of a stage-coach, who sees the passengers safe out of town for a few miles; and then, making his bow, turns back, and leaves them to pursue the rest of the journey by themselves. But divine grace does not thus deal by God's travellers. It accompanies them to their journey's end, and without end. So that the meanest pilgrim to Sion may shout, with David, in full certainty of faith, Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all my days, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever (*c*). Therefore, for preserving grace, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the glory, for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

7. After God has led his people through the wilderness of life, and brought them to the edge of that river which lies between them and the heavenly Canaan, will he intermit his care of them, in that article of deepest need? No, blessed be his name. On the contrary, he (always safely; and, generally, comfortably) escorts them over to the other side; to that good land which is very far off, to that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

I know there are some flaming Arminians who tell us, that "a man may persevere until he comes to die, and yet perish in almost the very article of death:" and they illustrate this wretched, god-dishonouring, and soul-shocking doctrine, by the simile of "a ship's foundering in the harbour's mouth."

(*a*) Rom. vii. 25. (*b*) 1 Sam. ii. 9. (*c*) Psalm xxiii.

It is very true, that some wooden vessels have so perished. But it is no less true, that all God's chosen vessels are infallibly safe from so perishing. For, through his goodness, every one of them is insured by him whom the winds and seas, both literal and metaphorical obey. And their insurance runs this: When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and when through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee (*a*). The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads (*b*): so far from foundering within sight of land.

Even an earthly parent is particularly careful and tender of a dying child: and, surely, when God's children are in that situation, he will (speaking after the manner of men) be doubly gracious to his helpless offspring, who are his by election, by adoption, by covenant, by redemption, by regeneration, and by a thousand other indissoluble ties.

There are no marks of shipwrecks, no remnants of lost vessels, floating upon that sea, which flows between God's Jerusalem below and the Jerusalem which is above. The excellent Dr. William Gouge (*c*) has an observation full to the present point. "If a man," says he, "were cast into a river, we should look upon him as safe, while he was able to keep his head above water. The church, Christ's mystic body, is cast into the sea of the world [and, afterwards, into the sea of death]; and Christ, their head, keeps himself aloft, even in heaven. Is there then any fear, or possibility, of drowning a member of this body? If any should be drowned, then either Christ himself must be drowned first, or else that member must be pulled from Christ: both which are impossible. By virtue, therefore, of this union, we see that on Christ's safety, ours depends. If he is safe, so are we. If we perish, so must he."

(*a*) Isa. xliii. 2. (*b*) Isa. xxxv. 10. (*c*) Expos. of Eph. v.

Well, therefore, may dying believers sing, Not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name, give glory! Thy loving mercy carries us, when we cannot go: and, for thy truth's sake, thou wilt save us to the utmost without the loss of one.

8. When the emancipated soul is actually arrived in glory, what song will he sing then? The purport of the text will still be the language of the skies: Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give the praise.

Whilst we are upon earth, we have need of that remarkable caution, which Moses gave the children of Israel (*a*): Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, for my righteousness, the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess this land. - - - - Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land, to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people. Now, if the earthly Canaan, which was only a transitory inheritance, was unattainable by human merit; if even worldly possessions are not given us for our own righteousness' sake; who shall dare to say, that heaven itself is the purchase of our own righteousness! If our works cannot merit even the vanishing conveniences and supplies of time: how is it possible, that we should be able to merit the endless riches of eternity? We shall (*b*) need no

(*a*) Deut. ix. 4, &c.

(*b*) I have been informed, that, when the news of John Goodwin's death was brought to his uncle, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, the latter cried out, "Then there is another good man gone to heaven."——"Gone to heaven, Sir?" answered the person; "why, your nephew was an Arminian."——The Doctor replied, "True: he was an Arminian, on earth; but he is not an Arminian now."

Whether John Goodwin went to heaven, or not (which is a question too high for sublunary decision), certain it is, as I have already observed, that not one inhabitant of the celestial city ever

cautions against self-righteousness, when we get safe to that better country. The language of our hearts, and of our voices will be; and angels will join the concert; and all the elect, both angels and men, will, for ever and ever, strike their harps to this key; Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name, give the glory, for thy loving mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

O may a sense of that loving mercy and truth be warmly and transformingly experienced in our hearts! For indeed, my dear brethren, it is experience, or the felt power of God upon the soul, which makes the gospel a savour of life unto life. Notwithstanding God's purpose is stedfast as his throne; notwithstanding the whole of Christ's righteousness and redemption is finished and complete, as a divine and almighty agent could make it; notwithstanding I am convinced, that God will always be faithful, to every soul whom he has called out of darkness into his marvellous light; and notwithstanding none can pluck the people of Christ from his hands; still, I am no less satisfied, that it must be the feeling sense of all this, i. e. a perception wrought in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, that will give you and me the comfort of the Father's gracious decrees, and of the Messiah's finished work.

I know it is growing very fashionable, to talk against spiritual feelings. But I dare not join the cry. On the contrary, I adopt the apostle's prayer, that our love to God, and the manifestations of his love to us, may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all feeling (*a*). And it is no enthu-

carried a single particle of Arminianism with him into the gates of that Jerusalem. Of every Arminian now living, whose name is in the book of life, it may be truly said, that, if grace do not go so far as to make him a Calvinist on earth, glory (i. e. grace made perfect) will certainly stamp him a Calvinist, in the kingdom of God, at farthest.

(*a*) Phil i. 9.—The word αισθησις (rendered judgment in our English translation) literally and properly signifies feeling, or

siastic wish in behalf of you and of myself, that we may be of the number of those "godly persons," who, as our church justly expresses it, "feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things (*a*)." Indeed, the great business of God's Spirit is, to draw up and to bring down. To draw up our affections to Christ, and to bring down the unsearchable riches of grace into our hearts. The knowledge of which, and earnest desire for it, are all the feelings I plead for. And, for these feelings, I wish ever to plead. Satisfied as I am, that, without some experience and enjoyments of them, we cannot be happy, living or dying.

Let me ask you, as it were, one by one; has the holy Spirit began to reveal these deep things of God in your soul? If so, give him the glory of it. And, as you prize communion with him; as you value the comforts of the Holy Ghost; endeavour to be found in God's way, even the high way of humble faith and obedient love: sitting at the feet of Christ, and desirous to imbibe those sweet, ravishing, sanctifying, communications of grace, which are at once an earnest of, and a preparation for, complete heaven when you come to die. God forbid, that we should ever think lightly of religious feelings! for, if we do not in some degree feel ourselves sinners, and feel that Christ is precious; I doubt, the Spirit of God has never been savingly at work upon our souls.

Nay, so far from being at a stand in this, our desires after the feeling of God's presence within, ought to enlarge continually, the nearer we draw to the end of our earthly pilgrimage: and resemble the pro-

sensible perception. The apostle wished his Philippians, not only to love God, but to know that they loved him, and that he loved them; and to know it feelingly.

(*a*) Article 17th.

gressive expansion of a river, which, however narrow and straightened when it first begins to flow, never fails to widen and increase, in proportion as it approaches the ocean into which it falls.

God give us a gracious spring-tide of his Spirit, to replenish our thirsty channels, to swell our scanty stream, and to quicken our languid course! If this is not our cry, it is a sign, either that the work of grace is not yet begun in us; or that it is indeed at low water, and discoloured with those dregs, which tend to dishonour God, to eclipse the glory of the gospel, and to spread clouds and darkness upon our souls.

Some Christians are like decayed mile stones; which stand, it is true, in the right road, and bear some traces of the proper impression: but so wretchedly mutilated and defaced, that they who go by, can hardly read or know what to make of them. May the blessed Spirit of God cause all our hearts, this morning, to undergo a fresh impression; and indulge us with a new edition of our evidences for heaven! O may showers of blessing descend upon you from above! May you see that Christ, and the grace of God in him, are all in all! Whilst you are upon earth, may you ever ascribe the whole glory to him! And sure I am, that, when you come to heaven, you will never ascribe it to any other.

# SERMON VII.

## GOOD NEWS FROM HEAVEN:

OR,

## THE GOSPEL A JOYFUL SOUND.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A

# DISCOURSE

PREACHED

IN THE LOCK CHAPEL, NEAR HYDE PARK CORNER.

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 19th, 1774.

How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.—PSALM XXXVI. 6.

# SERMON VII.

PSALM lxxxix. 15, 16.

*Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance: In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.*

I HAVE often wondered at the hardiness of those writers, who have presumed to affirm, that the gospel, or message of free and full salvation by the blood and righteousness of God's co-eternal Son, was unknown to those who lived under the legal dispensation.

Nothing can be more untrue. We may as reasonably affirm, that the sun did not shine during the legal dispensation. And as it was the same sun, which now shines, that then illuminated the world; so it was the self same Sun of righteousness, who now rises upon the souls of his people with healing in his beams (*a*), that then shone upon God's elect, visited them with the irradiations of his love, and saved them by faith in his own future righteousness and atonement. Unto us, saith the apostle, is the gospel preached, as well as unto them (*b*). And again, These all died in faith, having seen the promises afar off; and were persuaded of them [πεισθεντες, were assured of interest in them], and embraced them (*c*). So that we may confidently affirm, concerning all God's enlightened people who lived before the Messiah's incarnation, that like Abraham (*d*), they saw the day of

(*a*) Mal. iv. 2. (*b*) Heb. iv. 2. (*c*) Ib. xi. 13. (*d*) John viii. 56.

Christ in perspective, and rejoiced in the believing anticipation of that blessed sight.

As the depravation of human nature is intrinsically the same in all ages; and as men, in and of themselves, were neither better nor worse, during the Mosaic œconomy, than they have been ever since, and are at this day; it follows, that, the disorder being the self same, the remedy likewise must be the same; and, of course, that there are not two ways of salvation, one for the believing Jews, and another for the believing Gentiles; but that our Lord's declaration ever did, and ever must, stand good, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me (*a*). Suppose, we carry our appeal to this psalm, for the truth of the observation here made? What do you think David sings of in the text? Certainly he sings of those supernatural comforts imparted by the Holy Ghost, and which the Psalmist knew would be procured for all the elect, by the blood of Christ. Hence, he likewise celebrates the praises of that righteousness, in which, and in which alone, the redeemed of the Lord are exalted to a state of communion with God, and to the inheritance of the saints in light.

No wonder, therefore, that a Psalm, so richly fraught with evangelic truth, should open in a strain of praise and thanksgiving to that God of all grace, whose love to his people embraced them without beginning, and shall follow them without end. I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. Now, do you think that David did not enjoy, what has since been called, the full assurance of faith? or can you imagine, that David was unacquainted with what has since been termed, the doctrine of final perseverance? certainly, he was

(*a*) John xiv. 6.

led into the clear perception of both these truths; else, he could not have said, I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever; not only to-day, and to-morrow, if I live; not only this year, and the next, if I live; nor only through life, but when I come to die; and not only when I pass through the streams of death, but when I am landed safe on the other side; the high praises of his mercy and faithfulness shall be ever in my mouth. David was egregiously mistaken in his views, if what some blasphemously affirm to be true, that "he who is a child of God to-day, may be a child of the devil to-morrow." You must either deny that the psalmist wrote under the unerring guidance of God's Spirit; or you must admit, that the final preservation of God's renewed people is a doctrine of God's book.

But it is not enough for true believers to be sensible of the mercy of the Lord, and of the perpetuity of his grace: they wish to diffuse the savour of his name far and wide, and to realize David's resolution, with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. Some, who know the truth, shun to declare it, and are afraid to speak out; they hide Christ's mark in the palm of their hands, instead of wearing it on their foreheads; and wrap up their Christianity in a cloke of secresy, as if they deemed it their highest dishonour to be seen with Christ's livery upon their backs. On the contrary, such believers as are strong in faith, giving glory to God, instead of sneaking to heaven through bye-ways and private roads, concealed in a covered litter, with the curtains drawn close about them; rather wish to go thither, over the public road of a declared profession, in an open chariot, so as to be seen and known of all men. But ministers of the gospel, above all mankind beside, should, with their mouths, make known God's faithfulness; and, instead of desiring to slink into heaven at the back-door (if any such door there be), march publicly, with colours flying, and with sound of trumpet, to the great

gate of the celestial city, and labour to carry thither as many souls with them as they possibly can.—Hence, they must be urgent and importunate, in season and out of season; reproving, rebuking, and exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine (*a*): the ministry of the word being the principal reaping-hook, which God's Spirit makes use of, to cut off the poisonous excrescences of self-righteousness, to cut down the baneful weeds of practical licentiousness, and to gather elect sinners to the sanctifying and saving knowledge of himself. Let it, however, be observed, that the ministerial calls and exhortations of God's ambassadors, urged and addressed as well to the awakened, as the unawakened; do by no means imply, that, in the divine intention, grace is universal, as the Arminians talk; nor that man, by a proper use of his reasonable faculties, becomes the architect of his own salvation. No. Quite the contrary. A fisher, who stands upon the shore, and plunges his net into the sea at large, is not so frantic as to think of catching all the fishes in the sea, though he offers the net indefinitely and without exception. So, when a Christian minister spreads the gospel-net, he preaches to all that come within the sphere of his address; not with an expectation of catching all, but of catching as many as God shall please; knowing, that it is the holy Spirit alone who can drive souls into the net, and effectually catch them for Jesus Christ.

What was it which made David so desirous to sing of the mercies of the Lord? What was it that warmed and emboldened him, at all events, to make known Jehovah's faithfulness, from one generation to another? It was the glorious gospel of the blessed God, seen in the light of the Spirit, and experienced through the influence of grace. Here is the reason of David's zeal: for I have said, mercy

(*a*) 2 Tim. iv. 2.

shall be built up for ever, thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. What is this mercy, that is built up for ever; but the glorious and the gracious scheme, the glorious and the gracious fabric, of our salvation, founded in the eternal purpose of God —carried into execution by the labours and the death of Jesus Christ—and then applied and brought home to the heart by the illuminating and converting power of the Holy Ghost? This is that mercy, which is built up for ever. It was planned from everlasting; and will know no ruin or decay, through the illimitable line of eternity itself. Who is the builder of this fabric? Not man's free-will. Not man's own righteousness nor wisdom. Not human power nor human skill. Every true believer will here join issue with David, that it is God, and God alone, who builds up the temple of his church; and who, as the builder of it, is alone entitled to all the glory.

The elect constitute and form one grand house of mercy: an house, erected to display and to perpetuate the riches of the Father's free grace of the Son's atoning merit, and of the Holy Ghost's efficacious agency. This house, contrary to the fate of all sublunary buildings, will never fall down, nor ever be taken down. As nothing can be added (*a*) to it, so nothing can be diminished from it. Fire cannot injure it; storms cannot overthrow it; age cannot impair it. It stands on a rock (*b*), and is immoveable as the rock on which it stands: the threefold rock of God's inviolable decree, of Christ's finished redemption, and of the Spirit's never-failing faithfulness. God is neither an unwise, a feeble, nor a capricious architect. He does not form a wretched scheme, liable to be frustrated, and which will hardly hang together at best; but all is well ordered, all is everlasting, all is sure, and nothing

(*a*) Eccl. iii. 14. (*b*) Matth. vii. 25. and xvi. 18.

consigned to after-thought or peradventure. God having irreversibly drawn his plan, and Christ having completely accomplished the redeeming work assigned him; the sacred Spirit has only to breathe upon the hearts of his people in effectual calling, give them faith, imbue them with inward holiness, preserve and increase the holiness he communicates, lead them forth in the paths of outward duty and obedience, exercise them with desertions, visit them with his comforts, keep them from falling, or restore them when fallen, seal them to the day of Christ, and carry them safely through death to heaven.

Thus mercy shall be built up for ever. And as surely as this book is the book of God; as surely as the Spirit of God inspired it, and inclined David to write these words; so surely is that a truth, which the words themselves convey. No part of salvation is left at sixes and sevens; but the whole is a plan which does honour to infinite wisdom; a plan, conceived and hid (*a*) in the all-wise mind of God from eternal ages, but afterwards externally made known in the written word, or gospel of grace; and savingly unfolded in the souls of men, when the blessed Spirit begins to turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God (*b*).

I was yesterday, at some little distance from town; and received a very refined entertainment, in going over a most superb and elegant mansion, which, both within and without, exhibited such a combination of magnificence, beauty, and perfection of taste, that I could not help feeling a curiosity to know, how long that masterly edifice was in building? and, on being informed that it was both founded and finished, within the compass of ten months only; I could not help observing, to some friends who were with me, that if human art and human hands could rear so transcendent a fabric as this, in so short a space; why should we think it

(*a*) Eph. iii. 9. (*b*) Acts xxvi. 18.

strange, that Jesus Christ was able to finish, and that he actually did finish, the fabric of man's salvation in a course of three and thirty years?

Blessed be God, our salvation is a finished work. It neither needs nor will admit of supplement.—And here, let us remember, that, when we talk of a finished salvation, we mean, that complete and infallibly effectual redemption, accomplished by the propitiatory merit of Christ's own personal obedience and of Christ's own personal sufferings; both one and the other of which have that infinite perfection of atoning and of justifying efficacy, that it is utterly out of our power to add any thing to the merit or validity of either. Every individual of mankind, for whom Christ obeyed, and for whom he bled, shall most certainly be saved by his righteousness and death, not one of the redeemed number excepted; seeing Christ has paid, completely paid, the debt of perfect obedience and of penal suffering: so that divine justice must become unjust, ere it be possible for a single soul to perish for all or any of those debts which Christ took upon himself to discharge, and which he has absolutely discharged accordingly.

Arminianism cannot digest this grand Bible truth. Hence, that poor, dull, blind creature, bishop Taylor tells us, some where, if I mistake not, that "We are to atone for our great sins by weeping, and for our little sins by sighing." If our sins have no other atonement than this, we shall go on weeping, and wailing, and gnashing our teeth, to all eternity. But thanks to divine grace, the work of atonement is not now to do. Christ has already put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself(*a*). We are acquitted from guilt, and reconciled to God, not by our own tears, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without spot or

(*a*) Heb. ix. 26.

blemish (*a*):—not our own sighs, and tears, and sorrows; but the humiliation, the agony, the bloody sweat, and the bitter death, of him who did no sin, of him who was found in fashion as a man, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; these, and these alone, are the propitiation for our sins (*b*). And as surely as Christ obeyed, as surely as Christ expired, as surely as he rose again, as surely as he intercedes for all the people of his love; so certainly will they all, first and last, be enabled to sing of his faithfulness to all generations; and of that mercy which shall be built up for ever in their full, free, and final glorification.

This is farther confirmed, by those words of the psalmist, thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. As much as to say: "When all thy chosen, redeemed, and converted people are assembled round thy throne; then thou wilt, in the very heavens, give an everlasting proof of thy everlasting faithfulness." So far will God be, from leaving his people to perish in their passage through the wilderness of life, or through the river of death; that he will present them all faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy (*c*). God loves his jewels too well, and Christ bought them at too dear a rate, and the holy Spirit polishes them with too much attention, either to throw them away, or to lose them at last. No: they shall be made up (*d*); their number shall be accomplished; and in their glorification will the whole Trinity be glorified.

Now, after surveying some of the branches, let us look at the grand root from whence they spring. Having taken a cursory view of these streams, by which the church of God is enriched unto salvation; let us endeavour to contemplate them in their great source and head. That you will find, in verse

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 19. (*b*) 1 John ii. 2. (*c*) Jude 24. (*d*) Mal. iii. 17.

the third, where God the Father says, I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Do you suppose that this was spoken to David, in his own person only? No, indeed: but to David as the antitype, figure, and forerunner of Jesus Christ.—— Hence, the Septuagint version renders it, I have covenanted τοις εκλεκτοις μου, with my elect people, or with my chosen ones: i. e. with them in Christ, and with Christ in their name. I have sworn unto David my servant, unto the Messiah, who was typified by David, unto my co-eternal Son, who stipulated to take on himself the form of a servant; thy seed, i. e. all those whom I have given to thee in the decree of election, all those whom thou shalt live and die to redeem, these will I establish for ever, so as to render their salvation irreversible and inamissible; and build up thy throne, thy mediatorial throne, as king of saints and covenant head of the elect, to all generations: there shall always be a succession of favoured sinners to be called and sanctified, in consequence of thy fœderal obedience unto death; and every period of time shall recompence thy covenant-sufferings, with an increasing revenue of converted souls, until as many as are ordained to eternal life (*a*) are gathered in.

Observe, here, that when Christ received this promise from the Father, concerning the establishment of his [i. e. of Christ's] throne to all generations; the plain meaning is, that his people shall be thus established: for, consider Christ in his divine capacity as the Son of God, and his throne was already established, and had been from everlasting; and would have continued to be established without end, even if he had never been incarnate at all. Therefore, the promise imports, that Christ shall

(*a*) Acts xiii. 48.

reign, not simply as a person in the godhead (which he ever did, and ever will, and ever must); but relatively, mediatorially, and in his office-character, as the deliverer and king of Zion. Hence it follows, that his people cannot be lost: for he would be a poor sort of king, who had, or might have no subjects to reign over. Consequently, that throne of glory on which Christ sits, is already encircled in part, and will at last be completely surrounded, and made still more glorious, by that innumerable company, that general assembly, and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven (*a*): for the remission of whose sins, his blood was shed; for the justification of whose persons, his righteousness was wrought; for the preservation of whom in a state of grace, his intercession is still carried on in heaven; and to recover and retrieve whom from the personal dishonours of sin, the holy Spirit comes down, and takes up his abode in their hearts, nor will ever cease from his gracious guardianship, until he has sanctified them into the kingdom of God.

Well may the psalmist add, And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. What are we here to understand by the heavens? I should suppose, the primary inhabitants of heaven; namely, the angels of light. Electing goodness, redeeming mercy, sanctifying grace, and preserving power, so beneficently exhibited in the salvation of fallen man, are wonders even to the very angels themselves. But are angels the only beings who shall wonder at this display of love? No: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. In the congregation of believing saints below, and of glorified saints above. For saints and angels, in the great result of things, when the transactions of grace and providence shall be unfolded and clearly laid open to

(*a*) Heb. xii. 23.

the delighted view; at that august period, saints and angels, the redeemed and the unredeemed (but both elected, the one as well as the other) spirits that were always unembodied, and saints whose souls were for a time dislodged from the body in consequence of original sin, but who shall receive their bodies again in their resurrection of the just; all these, when they stand and shine above, shall join in casting their crowns, and in striking their golden lyres to the praises of him who has loved his people, and redeemed them unto God by his blood (*a*).

Time will not allow me to consider, as I designed, all the preliminary verses which lead to the text. Enough, I hope, has been observed, to justify the declaration with which the text begins: Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! awfully intimating, that there are some, who sit within the sphere of this joyful sound, but who know it, feel it, and enjoy it not. It is to them, à vox, et præterea nihil: a sound, and no more than a sound. But the blessedness results to those who know the joyful sound; and whose believing souls can say, the free blessings of the gospel are all our salvation, and all our desire.

It is a very common thing, when we talk of knowing the things that belong to our spiritual and eternal peace, for unconverted people to cry out, Oh, how presumptuous you are! I totally deny the charge. It is not presumptuous to take God at his word, and to believe and be sure that there shall be a performance of the things which are spoken and promised by the Lord (*b*). Thus when God avers to the penitent sinner, I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins (*c*); it is not humility, but presumption itself, and the very quintessence of unbelief, that bids us put a negative on God's solemn asseve-

(*a*) Rev. v. 9. (*b*) Luke i. 45. (*c*) Isai. xliii. 25.

ration, and induces us to question whether he will indeed make good his promise. I am firmly of opinion, that the man, who reads and professes to believe the Bible, must have a large stock of assurance, in the worst sense of the word (i. e. of audaciousness and effrontery), if he ventures to deny, that assurance, in the best sense of the word, or a clear perception and conviction of interest in God's pardoning love, is the possible privilege of Christ's converted people. These will certainly concur with David, in pronouncing them blessed, who know the joyful sound; who know it when they hear it, and who know it for themselves: whose hearts have been ploughed up by the Spirit of God, to receive the gospel-seed; and in whom it springs into righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (*a*). This, and this alone, comes up to the full idea of knowing the joyful sound. Hence we may learn, who the persons are that know it indeed. Not church of England people, in exclusion of others; not Romanists; not members of the church of Scotland; nor, in short, the partisans of any one denomination in particular. But the many individuals, who, through grace, are enabled to know the joyful sound, are those whom God takes out of all these and other denominations, to be a people for his name (*b*): to wit, the elect, of every age, place, and party. All God's converted, all his repenting, all his believing, all his obeying people, through the whole extent of the earth, from under one end of the heavens to the other; all whose hearts are touched by the attractive power of his divine Spirit, are the people that know the joyful sound.

The joyful sound of what? Of that free grace, which it is the business of God's ministers to proclaim, saying, Peace, peace, to him that is far off, and to him that is near (*c*). That joyful sound,

(*a*) Rom. xiv. 17. (*b*) Acts xv. 14. (*c*) Isa. lvii. 19.

which says, Ho, every one (without exception of time or place, or person) Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters (*a*) of life, joy, and salvation. But observe, that even this is not an universal call. God forbid, that I should be misunderstood, by any who hear me this day. Do not imagine, that I am hoisting the Arminian colours, and hanging out the false Arminian flag. No, by no means. I suppose there is hardly a more indefinite call, in all God's word, than that which I quoted last. But then, take notice, it is addressed only to those, that thirst: i. e. to those, who so far know the joyful sound, as to wish for an experimental participation of the blessings it proclaims. It would be frivolous, to call them to the waters, who do not thirst. It would be ridiculous mockery, should we invite the dead to sit down at table, and lay a plate and knife and fork before them, and ask them why they will not eat? The plain fact is, they cannot eat, or drink. They must be made alive, ere they can have so much as an appetite to either.

There is a passage, very frequently, but very idly, insisted upon by the Arminians; as if it were an hammer, which would at one stroke, crush the whole fabric of free grace to powder. The passage is, Why will ye die, O house of Israel (*b*)? But it so happens, that the death here alluded to, is neither spiritual death, nor eternal death: as abundantly appears from the whole tenor of the chapter. The death, intended by the prophet, is a political death; a death of national prosperity, tranquillity, and security. And the sense of the question is, fairly and precisely, this: What is it that makes you in love with captivity, banishment, and civil ruin? Abstinence from the worship of images, might, as a people, exempt you from those calamities, and once more render you a respectable nation. Are the miseries of public devastation so

(*a*) Isa. lv. 1. (*b*) Ezek. xviii. 31.

very alluring, as to attract your determined pursuit? Why will ye die? die as the house of Israel; and considered as a political body? Thus reasonably did the prophet argue the case. Adding, at the same time, this no less reasonable declaration: As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye. Which imports these two things: 1. That the national captivity of the Jews added nothing to the happiness of God. It brought him no accession, either of profit or pleasure. And I should wonder much, if (philosophically speaking) any thing whatever could add to the divine felicity, which is already infinite; and consequently insusceptible of augmentation.—2. That, if the Jews turned from idolatry, and flung away their images; they should not die in a foreign hostile country, but live peaceably in their own land, and enjoy their liberties as an independent people.

And now what has all this to do with the blessings of grace and glory! No more than it has to do with Gog and Magog. Would it not be very absurd, if I were to stand in a church-yard, and say to the dead bodies there interred, why will ye die? Nor, in my idea, would it be less so, were I to ask a spiritually dead sinner, why wilt thou die? Alas, he is dead already (*a*): and to put such a question to one in such

(*a*) An ingenious pen has lately exposed, with equal strength and delicacy, the impertinent application, which Arminianism makes, of the prophet Ezekiel's question and exhortation.

" Arise, ye dead," Arminius cries;
" Arise, ye dead in sin!
unstop your ears, unseal your eyes,
and a new life begin.
Why will ye die, ye wretched souls?
ye dead, why will ye die?
Quicken and make your spirits whole;
" to life eternal fly."
As Baal's worshippers of old,
begg'd, pray'd, and cry'd aloud;

a state, would be, in reality, to ask a man, who is already fallen in Adam (as every man is), why wilt thou fall in Adam? Let Arminians rant in this manner, if they think fit. They shall for me, have all the ranting, unenvied and unrivalled, to themselves. I think it will not bear water.

Quite a different thing is the joyful sound of gospel grace. It imparts life to the dead, and health to the living. You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins (*a*). And, says God, concerning his quickened church, I will [not tantalize her with an empty offer; but actually] bring it health and cure (*b*). Regeneration gives spiritual life, and sanctification gives spiritual health to the soul. How is spiritual health evidenced to ourselves and others? Not by lolling in the elbow chair of sloth; but by abounding in the work of the Lord. For, however some people may call us Antinomians (as Christ himself and the apostles were so (*c*) called before us, by the unblushing Pharisees of that age), and falsely accuse our good conversation (*d*), as

cutting their bodies, as we are told,
to move a fancied god;
So on the idol man he'll call,
and pompously declare,
though slightly damaged by the fall,
how great his powers are.
"Rise, noble creature! Man, arise!
and make yourself alive!
prepare yourself to mount the skies;
for endless glory strive."
Deluded Seer! But man will lie
still senseless as a stone;
and you yourself stand fooling by,
'till both are quite undone:
Unless Almighty power be mov'd
by God's free-will, not thine,
to quicken both, and make his love
on both your hearts to shine.

See Serious Essays, in verse, p. 104. by the Rev. Mr. John Ryland, junior.

(*a*) Eph. ii. 1. (*b*) Jer. xxxiii. 6. (*c*) Matth. xi. 19. with Rom. iii. 8. (*d*) 1 Pet. iii. 16.

though we were enemies to the moral law; we are so far from it, that (I aver it boldly, and let any contradict me if they can)—We, who believe salvation to be the absolute gift of grace, are the only people that assert the due honours of the law, and establish its authority on an unshaken basis.

1. We assert its honours, by considering it as a transcript of God's own holiness; as absolutely perfect in all its requisitions; as the invariable standard of moral excellency; as the sublime rule by which Christ himself adjusted his own matchless obedience; and as the school-master, which, in subserviency to the holy Spirit's influence, prepares us (by the severity of its discipline) for the reception of Christ, and for hearing, to good purpose, that sound of gospel grace, which is joyful to those only, whom the law, thus viewed, has (*a*) instrumentally convinced of sin.

2. We establish its (*b*) authority, by grafting our obedience to it upon the never-dying principle of (*c*) love to Christ; by aiming at practical conformity to its precepts, as the grand visible evidence of our part in God's election and in the Messiah's (*d*) redemption; by believing and asserting, that it still remains in full force, and will so remain while the sun and moon endure, as the rule of our moral walk; and by beseeching God the Holy Ghost to (*e*) write it upon our hearts accordingly. For, whatever is absolutely of moral obligation, is and must be in its very nature irrepealable.

Thus does the joyful sound proclaim the majesty, and even add to the sanctions, of the moral law. To fulfil the whole righteousness of that law, and to endure its awful penalty, as a covenant of works, the Son of God Most High bowed the heavens and came down.—To make his ransomed peo-

(*a*) Gal. iii. 24. Rom. iii. 20. (*b*) Rom. iii. 31. (*c*) 1 Cor. xiii. 8. with Matth. xxvii. 40. (*d*) 1 Pet. i. 2. (*e*) Heb. viii. 10.

ple love that law as a directory of conduct; and to make them actually transcribe its maxims into their lives, as a medium of their conformity to God; the uncreated Spirit descends upon their souls as a dove, and works in them both to will and to do.

But still we must consider the law, as in the hand of (*a*) Christ: and remember, that the love of God, graciously shed (*b*) abroad in the heart, is that only acceptable principle from which believers act.

Now, that joyful sound which the people are pronounced blessed who know, consists greatly in what the word of God brings to light, concerning (*c*) that eternal purpose of electing grace, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. For, notwithstanding the profane endeavours of some to misrepresent that great and precious truth, as a gloomy, uncomfortable doctrine; they whose eyes God has enlightened, and they whose hearts God has touched, know, that it is not a gloomy, but a joyful sound: and all their hearts desire is, O that I might, with more unclouded faith, behold my name shining in the Lamb's Book of Life! Christ himself, that great preacher of predestination, and who certainly was a competent judge of the question in hand, considered election as an heart reviving doctrine; or he would have never commanded his disciples to rejoice because their names are written in heaven (*d*). Whoever professes to preach the gospel, without taking absolute election into the account, that minister turns his back upon the tree of life, quenches one of the capital lights which he ought to elevate on a candlestick, and withholds from his people the very root and essence of the joyful sound.

What is free remission of sin, through the precious blood and atonement of Jesus Christ;—what is unconditional and irreversible justification, through

(*a*) 1 Cor. ix. 21. (*b*) Rom. v. 5. (*c*) Eph. iii. 11. (*d*) Luke x. 20.

Christ's righteousness imputed;—what is that truth which tells us, that the Spirit of Christ is the renewer, the inhabitant, the illuminator, and the everlasting comforter of God's children;—what is that word which assures us, that the Lord will not turn away from the people of his love, nor suffer them finally to turn away from him, but that he will seal them his for ever, and preserve them through life and death to glory, though every step they take upon earth is paved with snares, and, if left to themselves a moment, down they must fall into the nethermost hell;—what is the continued advocacy of Christ, whereby he wears his priesthood upon his throne, and intercedes for his militant people, so that, while they are travelling, or fighting, or fainting, he is praying, by the perpetual presentation of himself before God, as a lamb newly slain;—what are the promises which relate to the succour, support, and deliverance of the soul, in death; which ensure a bodily resurrection to glory, honour, and immortality; and which ascertain the endless beatification of soul and body together, in the kingdom of God;—What, I say, are all these, but so many parts and branches of the joyful sound? And a joyful sound it is. God make it such to us!

Was the matter left in the hand of our free-will, the joyful sound would soon darken into a dismal one. We should never come into a state of grace at all. And, if God was to put us into it, and then resign us to our own management, we should quickly make shipwreck of every thing. Adam, in the state of innocence, did not probably stand twenty-four hours. And how should the believer, who is in a mixt state of sin and grace, and in whom are (*a*) the company of two armies, flesh and spirit, at perpetual war with each other; how could such a person possibly continue, even for four-and-twenty

(*a*) Cant. vi. 13.

minutes, if the same Almighty love, which put him into the covenant, did not keep him in it?

A good man of the last century, says, and with great truth, "the strongest believer of us all is like a glass without a foot, which cannot stand one moment longer than it is held." And our Lord had a similar view of the matter, when he declared, that he holds all his sheep in (*a*) his hand: as much as to say, Was I to leave you for an instant, down you would fall: therefore I hold you fast, and none shall pluck thee out of my hand.

O how comfortable is it, when the Lord makes these truths known, by his Spirit, to the heart! How blessed are the people, that thus know the joyful sound! Who can see that God has loved them in his Son; who can feel that Christ died for them, to be their everlasting peace; who are satisfied that their peace is not now to make, but was completely made and sealed, by the precious blood of his cross, ages and ages before they drew their breath; who are sweetly assured, that the holy Spirit, who has begun to show them the great things of Christ, will go on more clearly to show them that he will never leave them nor forsake them, in life, in death, nor even at their journey's end! This is that joyful sound, which God enables his people to know. And what is the consequence of knowing it?

Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound. Wherefore are they blessed, or happy? And in what does their blessedness consist? They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. As much as to say, we need but know this joyful sound to be happy. We need but know what it is, to be loved, chosen, redeemed, and sanctified from among men; and then that knowledge will cause us to (*b*) walk upon our high places, and to triumph in the name of the Lord our God. We shall bask in the smile,

(*a*) John x. 28. see also Deut. xxxiii. 3. (*b*) Hab. iii. 19.

we shall enjoy the sunshine of God's countenance upon our souls.

What is the meaning of that phrase, They shall walk in the light of thy countenance? Suppose any great personage was to patronize some obscure man, and favour him with his peculiar intimacy and friendship. It would, in that case, be natural for us to say, "such a person is greatly countenanced by this or that nobleman." So, here: They shall walk in the light of thy countenance; i. e. they shall be sensibly in the favour of God. They shall enjoy comfortable communion and fellowship with God. They shall have a satisfactory persuasion, that the Lord is at peace with them, through the blood of Christ; and that (*a*) being justified by faith, they also are, on their part, at peace with the Lord. They (*b*) receive the atonement (for the true business of faith is, not to make atonement, but simply to receive and rest upon Christ's atonement, already made, and which faith itself does not render more efficacious than it intrinsically is). Sometimes the tide of assurance rolls in so richly upon the soul, as to rise quite (if I may so speak) to high water mark, and not to leave so much as the shadow of a doubt upon the mind. When it is thus with the believer, he may be eminently said to walk in the light of God's countenance. Faith looks (*c*) within the vail. The interposing scene opens. We almost hear the angels sing. We almost see the souls of the glorified do homage to grace, and throw their crowns at the divine footstool. We almost behold the King of saints (*c*) in his beauty, shining as (*d*) the Lamb in the midst of the throne.——Precious moments these! But soon the scene closes. We descend from the mountain top, and find ourselves again in the valley.

(*a*) Rom. v. 1 (*b*) Rom. v. 11. (*c*) Heb. vi. 19.
(*d*) Isa. xxxiii. 17. (*e*) Rev. v. 6.

If God, however, has not yet given you any assurance of his love, do not imagine, that you are therefore an alien and an outcast. For, I imagine that God's countenance, or favour, and the light of his countenance, or the clear and comfortable knowledge of his favour, are two distinguishable things. God may bear a favour to us, he may love us, and be resolved to save us; and yet not indulge us with the immediate light of his countenance.——But, of one thing, I am as clearly positive, as that I am now preaching in the Lock Chapel: namely, that none, whose hearts are at all wrought upon by the finger of God's Spirit, can sit down, quite easily and contentedly, without wishing to experience what the light of God's countenance means. Their desire is, to know it, to walk in it, and to walk worthy of it.

Have you never observed, after the sun has been shining, perhaps, for hours together, a diffusing mist has arisen from the earth, or a floating cloud has interposed in the sky, and shaded the grand luminary from your view? yet, in reality, the sun still shone as before, though your sensation of its lustre was suspended.—Thus, in the darkest seasons of spiritual distress, God's countenance or favour is still toward you for good; and shines not only with inextinguishable, but also with undiminishable intenseness. Is it not, however, a most desirable felicity, to see and to feel the light of his face, beaming full upon us, as the sun when it goeth forth in its might (*a*)? This is what the apostle means, where he says: God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God [i. e. to enlighten us into the knowledge of the Father's glorious grace, as exhibited] εν προσωπῳ, in the person [and as displayed in the finished salvation] of Jesus

(*a*) Judges v. 31.

Christ (*a*). And this is likewise, what the psalmist means in the text: They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

Do you ask, "How is this happy communion with God to be attained?"—I answer: that it is not of human attainment, but of the holy Spirit's vouchsafement. Whence David elsewhere prays, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us (*b*).

Do you farther ask, "How this sweet illumination and fellowship are to be sought, and cultivated, and cherished?"—I answer: that the wisdom, and the will of God, and that orderly concatenation of one blessing with another, which he has established in his covenant of grace, all concur to assure us, that if we wish to enjoy the unintercepted rays of his presence within, we must cultivate holiness—abound in good works—be much in God's company, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving—drink continually at the fountain of his written word—and converse frequently, and compare experiences, with others of God's children; more especially with such of them as are either eminently lively, or remarkably exercised with desertions: such conversations are always profitable, and often make (*c*) our hearts burn within us, while we mutually unfold the scriptures, and (*d*) speak one to another, concerning (*e*) the things which pertain to the kingdom of God. The sick and the dying beds of Christ's people are, in a very eminent degree, schools of instruction and consolation. I have often gone to them, as cold (spiritually speaking) as a stone; and returned from them, half as warm as an angel.

In one word: communion with God requires, that we be found in all the means of grace, and in the way of universal duty; and that we shun, as we

(*a*) 2 Cor. iv. 6. (*b*) Psalm iv. 6. (*c*) Luke xxiv. 32.
(*d*) Mal. iii. 16. (*e*) Acts i. 3.

would poison or the plague, whatever tends to cast a damp upon our intercourse with the Holy Ghost, to tarnish our graces, or darken our evidences. Were you to find, that even the crossing of a straw was conducive to bring a cloud upon your soul, and to obstruct your fellowship with God; it would be as much your duty to abstain from crossing that straw, as if thou shalt not cross a straw was one of the ten commandments. But, in all these respects, every man must judge for himself in particular. God has generally connected good with good, and evil with evil. If therefore, you are suffered to be off your guard, and off your watch; though you cannot (if you are a true believer) so fall, as to break your neck; yet, you may break your limbs in such a manner, as to go halting to the day of your death. The Lord graciously "strengthen (*a*) such as do stand," and effectually "raise (*b*) up them that fall;" by making both these and those more ardently and more practically careful than ever, to walk in the light of his countenance! For, surely, next to the love of God's heart, believers value the smiles of his face; from which, as from the agency of the sun, arise the buddings of conscious joy; the leaves of unsullied profession; the variegated blossom of holy tempers; and the beneficent fruits of moral righteousness.

They are totally mistaken who suppose, that the light of God's countenance, and the privileges of the gospel, and the comforts of the Spirit, conduce to make us indolent and unactive in the way of duty. The text cuts up this surmise by the roots. For, it does not say, they shall sit down in the light of thy countenance; or, they shall lie down in the light of thy countenance; but they shall walk in the light of thy countenance. What is walking? It is a progressive motion from one point of space to

(*a*) Litany. (*b*) Ibid.

another. And what is that holy walking which God's Spirit enables all his people to observe? It is a continued, progressive motion, from sin to holiness; from all that is evil, to every good word and work.

And the self same light of God's countenance, in which you, O believer, are enabled to walk, and which at first gave you spiritual feet wherewith to walk, will keep you in a walking and in a working state, to the end of your warfare. So that your path shall, under the shinings of his Spirit, (for we can do nothing, but as he vouchsafes his grace from moment to moment) wax brighter and brighter, to the perfect day (*a*). The truly righteous shall hold on in his course; and he that hath clean hands shall grow stronger and stronger (*b*). Nor shall they only walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; they shall also, at times, even run and not be weary (*c*); namely, when they are eminently drawn of God. Draw us, and we will run after thee (*d*).

Though God finds all his children still-born, or spiritually dead, before he has quickened them by his own effectual power and grace; yet he makes them alive, in order that they may live afterwards, to his honour and glory (*e*). He lifts up the light of his countenance upon the human mind; with a view analagous to that, for which he causes the light of the natural sun to rise upon the world. To what end does the sun shine upon us in a morning? Not that we may continue to close our eyelids, and press all day, the bed of indolence: but, that we may up and be doing. And why does the light of God's Spirit shine inwardly upon his people? That they may arise and walk in the light of his countenance, and work the works of God, while it is day (*f*), as Jesus Christ gave them example: walk becomingly

(*a*) Prov. iv. 18. (*b*) Job xvii. 9. (*c*) Isai. xxxix. 31.
(*d*) Cant. i. 4. (*e*) 1 Pet. ii. 9. (*f*) John ix. 4.

of him, who has called them to glory and virtue. For, it is not holy talking, but holy walking, that proves us to be children of God.

Yet, after we have done as much, and have walked as far in the ways of God, as his grace has enabled us; what is the subject matter of our confidence and rejoicing? Not ourselves, nor our own performances: but the free mercy of the Father, and the all-perfect merit of him that died and rose again. As good Mr. Hervey asks, "Can our charitable deeds expiate our innumerable offences? As soon might a drop of fresh water correct and sweeten the unfathomable brine of the ocean. Can our defective performances satisfy the demands of a perfect law, or our wandering devotions screen us from the displeasure of an injured God? As well may our uplifted hand eclipse the sun; or intercept the lightning, when it darts through the bursting cloud. We can be reconciled to God, only by Jesus Christ (*a*)."—It is the sweet employ of faith, to do as many good works as she can; and to renounce them as fast as she does them: saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee (*b*)? &c.

(*a*) See Mr. Hervey's sermon, entitled, The Ministry of Reconciliation.

(*b*) Matth. xxv. 44.—The holy and judicious Dr. Crisp has some remarks, equally valuable in themselves, and pertinent to the argument in hand. "We [who believe] do not perform Christian duties, in order to our being delivered from wrath; but we perform them, because we are delivered.———A man will work for Christ, who hath tasted of Christ's loving kindness: he stands ready to show forth the praise of that glorious grace, which hath so freely saved him. Such a man is as glad to work for Christ's sake, as if he was to work for his own salvation.——There are many ingenious persons in the world, who will be more ready to serve a friend that has already raised them; than to serve a master, that they may be raised. This is the true service of a believer. His eye is to the glory of Christ, in regard of what Christ hath already done for him; and not in expectation of any thing Christ has yet to do. He looks upon all as perfectly done for him in the hand of Christ, and ready to be delivered out to him [i. e. to the believer himself] as his

Thus, we learn from the text, that the self same people, who walk in the light of God's countenance, and are active in the observations of moral duty, have, when they have done all, something infinitely better to rejoice in and to rely upon, than the sanctity of their walk, and the various duties which they perform. In thy name, not in their own rectitude, shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness, not in their own doings, shall they be exalted. During the day of sublunary life, they shall sing with the apostle, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (*a*): and when, having breathed their last on earth, they fly to the coast of immortality; they are then inchoatively, and shall (after the final audit) be completely, and everlastingly, exalted to the kingdom of God, in and through the alone imputed righteousness of their Saviour, their surety, and their head.

By the name of Christ, in which the elect are here said to rejoice, I understand Christ himself:

occasions may require. The work of salvation being thus completed by Christ, and not to be mended by the creature; the believer having now nothing to do for himself [as a cause or condition of salvation]; all he doth, he doth for Christ.——I would only ask you this plain question: Are our works of sanctification, Christ himself; or are they not? If they be Christ himself, then there are thousands of Christs in the world. If they be not Christ, then there is no coming to the Father by them: because, the coming to the Father for peace, pardon, reconciliation, and salvation, is by Christ alone; and by him as the sole way.——Salvation itself, therefore, is not the end proposed, in any good work we do. The ends of our good works are, the manifestation of our obedience and subjection; the setting forth the praise of God's grace, and thereby glorifying him in the world; the doing good to others, with a view to their profit; and the meeting the Lord Jesus Christ in the performance of duty, where he will be found, according to his promise. These are some of the special ends, for which obedience is ordained: salvation being settled firm before." Crisp's Sermons, vol. i. p. 69—77. Dr. Gill's Edit.

(*a*) Gal. vi.

the blessed person, signified by that name. Who is the brightness, the απαυγασμα, the emanation, or forth-beaming ray of the Father's glory (*a*): and is by virtue of that eternal and incomprehensible derivation (*b*), God of God; Light of Light; very God of very God; begotten, not made; co-equal partaker of one substance [i. e. of the same numerical nature and essence] with the Father; and by whom all things were made.

In his name, i. e. in the divinity of his person, and in his offices as mediator; in his finished atonement, in the perfect righteousness of his obedience, and in his never-failing intercession for the elect; it is the privilege of the humble, the contrite, the feeble, the tempted, and of the fallen (if returning) believer, to rejoice: because it was for such men, and for their salvation, that this adorable Being came down from heaven, and poured out his soul unto death.

Do not imagine, that David was an Antinomian, because he makes no mention of good works, as objects of joy and dependence. True it is, that he does not say, "Saints shall rejoice in their faithfulness, in their affected mortifications, or even in those works that spring from genuine grace." No: not in these, but in his name shall the Gentiles trust (*c*), and of his only righteousness shall they make their boast. Inherent graces and personal duties are the ornaments, but neither the foundation nor the pillars of God's mystic temple.

As Christ's righteousness is the only merit that can exalt us to the presence and to the kingdom of God; so that doctrine alone, is to be considered as evangelical, which depresses the righteousness of man, and exalts the righteousness of Christ: leading us to trust, not on what we do, but singly on

(*a*) Heb. i. 4. Symb. Nicæn.
(*b*) Θεος ΕΚ Θεϋ, φως ΕΚ φωτος, κ. τ. λ.
(*c*) Matth. xii. 21.

what he has done and suffered for us. The business of the law is, to knock us down from the pedestal of self confidence, and to grind us small; as Moses ground to powder, and dispersed the materials of the Israelitish idol. The business of grace is, to lift us from the dust, to settle us upon Christ the rock of ages, to put a new song of free salvation into our mouths, and to order our goings in the path of God's commandments. This it is (even the power of the Holy Ghost, who first breaks us in pieces by the hammer of the law, and then puts us together anew by the grace of the gospel) that enables us to rejoice in the name of Christ all the day. Not that a believer's rejoicing is uninterrupted, from the time of his conversion, until the moment of his arrival in heaven: for the elect have their weeping, as well as their triumphant seasons; and their pilgrimage is wisely chequered and diversified, both with joys and sorrows that the world knows not of. The meaning therefore of the text is, that a sinner is no sooner born again, than Christ, and Christ alone, becomes the object of that sinner's dependence: who can thenceforth say, with Dr. Watts,

> "*While Jews on their own works rely,*
> *And Greeks of wisdom boast;*
> *I love th' incarnate mystery,*
> *And there I fix my trust.*"

The converted sinner having thus, through the good hand of God upon him, fixed all his hopes on Jesus Christ the righteous, travels the residue of his way, leaning on the merits of the (*a*) beloved mediator: and, is finally exalted to the actual participation of the celestial inheritance above, in and by virtue of that divine righteousness, which God the Son wrought out, which God the Father imputes,

(*a*) Cant. viii. 5.

which God the Spirit applies, and felt emptying faith receives.

The learned and evangelical Mr. (*a*) Thomas Cole, a renowned and useful minister of Christ in the last century, had an observation or two, in his last illness, full to the sense of the clause with which the text concludes; In thy righteousness shall they be exalted. "It would be miserable dying, if we had not something, every way adequate to the demands of the law, to ground our hopes of eternal life upon. We have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God, by the way of Christ's righteousness. The devil, and the law, may meet us; yet cannot hinder us from entering into heaven by that righteousness. We shall be sure to meet with the devil, with conscience, with wicked men, and with the law of God, in our way to heaven: and we can deal with none of them, but by that righteousness which hath satisfied all. Let us bring that along with us, and they will all flee before it.—If a sinner comes in his own righteousness, shut him out, sayeth God; so sayeth conscience; so sayeth the law. But, when one comes, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, let him in, sayeth God; so sayeth conscience; so sayeth the law: and let the devil say a word to the contrary, if he dare.

(*a*) Author of a well known treatise on Regeneration, Faith, and Repentance. This excellent man died (if so triumphant a passage to glory may be called death), September 16, 1697; as I learn from a valuable manuscript, formerly put into my hands by a gentleman of London: out of which manuscript (containing Mr. Cole's own account of his spiritual experiences; together with a memoir, afterwards added, of his dying sayings) I extracted the passages given above. And I wish I was at liberty to publish more; or rather, that the very respectable and judicious person, who favoured me with a sight of those choice papers, would himself, give them to the public, and condescend to be the editor of them. I should ask his pardon, for the freedom I take, in venturing to print even the few lines here quoted, without having first solicited his permission; did I not believe, that he infinitely prefers the glory of God and of the gospel, to any punctilioes derivable from the scruples and delicacies of ceremonious complaisance.

"I should not dare to look death in the face, were it not for the comfortable assurance which faith gives me, of eternal life in Christ Jesus; and for the comfortable and abundant flowings in of that life. It is not what I bring to Christ, but what I receive from him. The beginnings of which I see springing up into life eternal.

"Some persons think to lick themselves whole, by their own moral righteousness; but it is the ready way to die in horror of conscience.

"If you want the manifestation of the pardon of any sins, carry them to free grace; which, having blotted them out, knows how to give you a sense of it.——The gospel of our salvation is a gospel of free grace: and they that would have it otherwise, may gather up what they can, and go boasting to heaven's gates; but they will be turned back again."

And how was this great man of God supported by Christ's righteousness, when in the immediate view of death? Learn what that righteousness can then do for us, by the following memorable speech, which he addressed to one of his visitants: "You are come to hear my last dying groans: but know, when you hear them, that they are the sweetest breath I ever drew since I knew Christ Jesus."

O thou blessed Son of God, exalt us in thy righteousness, and shake us out of our own! Ye, that hear me this day, which, O which, are you for? For being found and exalted in Christ's obedience? or for inheriting perdition and damnation in your own? God enable you, and cause you to choose the good part!

To cut off, as far as man can do it, all the pleas of proud, self-righteous unbelief, let me conclude with two or three pertinent remarks.

1. Why is the gospel news of salvation called the joyful sound? Not indefinitely, a joyful; but peculiarly, and exclusively of all other schemes whatever, the joyful sound?

Because it is the vehicle of making known to us, that God is love, and that he has (in the blood and righteousness of Christ) opened a channel for his love to exert itself in the salvation of the unworthy. The lost are found; the blind see; the deaf hear; the lame walk; the leprous are cleansed; the dead are made alive; and all, without money, and without price (*a*).

2. Have you any part or lot in that blessedness, of which the text speaks? Any comfortable views, or hopes of interest in God's election, and in Christ's propitiation, and in the Spirit's renewing grace? Ask and it shall (not be sold to you for your works, and for your imaginary fulfilment of pretended conditions; but a sense of interest shall) be given you: seek, in the alone name and for the alone righteousness sake of Christ, and ye shall find the mercies you want: knock, but let it be with an empty hand, at the door of divine clemency; and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks, receives; and he that seeks, finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened (*b*). As surely as God draws you to Christ; so surely will Christ, at his own set time, make you a sharer in the blessedness of them that know the joyful sound.

3. You who have believed with your hearts unto righteousness (*c*), give God the whole glory; and pray that you may continually have more enlivening views of that imputed righteousness, on which he has caused you to trust. As, on one hand, nothing can warrant and animate your joy; so, on the other (to use the expression of a good man now with God), "Nothing can effectually kill sin; but a clear beholding of Christ's righteousness." Cleave to this sure and stedfast anchor, and you will finally rise superior both to the waves of affliction, and to the mud of your own lusts and corruptions.

(*a*) Isa. lv. 1. (*b*) Matth. vii. 7, 8. (*c*) Rom. x. 10.

4. Make it your predominant object of ambition, to walk in the light of God's countenance. If you are blessed with his smile, no matter though the whole creation were to frown.

5. But whether you walk in light or darkness, in comfort or distress, remember that you have nothing but the name, the covenant, the person, and the work of Christ, to rejoice in and to depend upon. We, says the apostle, are the circumcision, who worship God the Spirit (*a*), and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

6. Know from whence all your spiritual and eternal exaltation arises. Not from yourselves in any respect, nor in any degree. Free will, until sanctified by regeneration, is a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint. And works, "done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are," as our church justly pronounces them to be, "sinful and displeasing to God (*b*)." Nay, even the best works we can perform after conversion, fall immensely short of what God's law requires; in point both of matter and of manner, of quantity and quality, of number, extent, purity, and weight.—What then would become of us, if it was not for Christ's righteousness? St. Paul himself, with all his matchless retinue of holy works and useful labours, must have sunk even from the scaffold of martyrdom, into the nethermost hell. Blessed, therefore, be the free grace of God, for that precious word of infallible promise, In thy righteousness shall thy people be exalted!

7. What is it which made, and will for ever continue to make, Christ's righteousness so infinitely meritorious and efficacious? The divinity of his person. All the created beings in the universe,

(*a*) Οι Πνευματι Θεῳ λατρευοντες, Phil. iii. 3. Irrefragable proof of the personality and absolute deity of the Holy Ghost!

(*b*) Article XIII.

whether angelic or human, unfallen, fallen, or restored; would never, by their utmost endeavours united, be able to furnish out and make up a righteousness of sufficient value to claim the favour of God upon the footing of justice and merit, or to present any one of the chosen seed blameless before the burning eyes of infinite sanctity. Such power belongeth only to the righteousness of the God-man Jehovah incarnate. Nothing but that all-perfect and everlasting merit, which is the complex result of his obedience and of his sacrifice, can exalt and retrieve us to the dignity and felicity of heaven.

The divinity of Christ can hardly receive stronger proof from scripture, than that which our text supplies. For the whole two verses which have been the subject of our meditation this morning, are a solemn address to the Messiah; not as man and Messiah, but in his highest capacity, as God with God, or as the eternally and the only begotten of the Father. Let us give the text a short review, and we shall immediately perceive, that it is neither more nor less than a devotional application, explicitly directed to the second person of the Trinity: an application, formed in the strictest terms of worship, even of worship absolutely and properly divine; and which cannot, without the most gross and damnable idolatry, be offered to any being inferior to God himself.

Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound of salvation by thee: They shall walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

Now, what would you think of the man that was to offer such an address as this to the highest archangel in heaven? And what was David, if he could solemnly and deliberately pen this address to a created intelligence; and cause it to be publicly sung by the Levites and chief singers of Israel, and

even leave it on record for the seduction of posterity? And at a time, too, when the Jewish nation were particularly careful to execrate and shun every thing that had the least tendency to idolatry? Either Christ is truly God, or David was the sacrilegious worshipper of a false one.

If, therefore, any of you should be beset by the cunning craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive; should you meet with such as tell you, that Christ is not Jehovah, or very and eternal God; recollect, if no other passage of scripture, yet these two verses and their context; which will alone, at any time, suffice to put to flight the sophistry of the aliens.

Can we be exalted in the righteousness of a creature? Would God the Father accept, and command us to trust in, the atonement of a finite being? By the same rule, we might (with the impudent papists) trust in the supposed merits of the Virgin Mary, or of St. any body else. And by the same rule, we might descend a step lower, and (with the still more impudent pelagians) trust in our own supposed merits, and burn incense to the withered arm of our own blasted free will. In short, there is no end to the horrible impieties which flow from trampling the divinity and the righteousness of Christ under foot.

Moreover, if Christ was not God over all, blessed for ever; each individual of mankind, who trusts in the Messiah's merits, would come within the circuit of that tremendous malediction, denounced by the lips of him who is able to save and to destroy. Thus saith Jehovah, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, &c. Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Faith in Christ would be the most damning sin under the

ecpe of heaven, and God's law would pronounce us accursed, for relying upon him; if he were not as absolutely Jehovah as the Father. And I must add, that this awful text concludes equally strong against Pharisees of all sorts and sizes, who trust either in angels, or in departed spirits, or in their own wretched selves, for any part of salvation, whether little or much. Christ alone is to be trusted in, for pardon, for justification, for everlasting life, and for the whole of our safety and felicity, from beginning to end. Whence it is immediately added, in the above chapter of Jeremiah, Blessed is the man that trusteth in Jehovah, and whose hope Jehovah is. For he [i. e. the man that trusts and hopes in Jesus only] shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

I perceive the elements are upon the sacramental table. And I doubt not, many of you mean to present yourselves at that throne of grace, which God has mercifully erected in the righteousness and sufferings of his co-equal Son. O beware of coming with one sentiment on your lips, and another in your hearts! Take heed of saying, with your mouths, "We do not come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness;" while, perhaps, you have in reality, some secret reserves in favour of that very self-righteousness, which you profess to renounce; and think that Christ's merit alone will not save you, unless you add something or other to make them effectual. O be not so deceived; for God will not thus be mocked, nor will Christ thus be insulted with impunity. Call your works what you will, whether terms, causes, conditions, or supplements; the matter comes to the same point, and Christ is

equally thrust out of his mediatorial throne, by these or any other similar views of human obedience. If you do not wholly depend on Jesus, as the Lord your righteousness (*a*); if you mix your faith in him with any thing else; if the finished work of the crucified God, be not alone, your acknowledged anchor and foundation of acceptance with the Father, both here and ever; come to his table, and receive the symbols of his body and blood at your peril. Leave your own righteousness behind you, or you have no business there. You are without the wedding garment; and God will say to you, Friend, how camest thou here? If you go on, moreover, to live and die in this state of unbelief; you will be found speechless and excuseless in the day of judgment; when the slighted Saviour will say to his angels, concerning you, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; for many are called, but few chosen (*b*).

On the contrary, you who can sincerely say, "We do not come to thee, trusting in our own righteousness," but feel and confess ourselves to be "unworthy of so much as gathering up the crumbs under thy table;" in thee alone do we seek to be justified, and in thee alone do we (*c*) glory; let such "draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to their comfort." The Lord enable you to bring your sins, and your duties, and yourselves, and your all, to the great propitiation! May he wash us in his own blood, clothe us with his own righteousness, and seal us an holy people to himself by his Spirit! Then shall we be acceptable guests at his table below; and ripen fast, for the house of glory above: while this is all our plea, and all our song——Lord, I am not worthy to come under thy roof, nor that thou shouldest come under mine;

(*a*) Jer. xxiii. 6. (*b*) Mat. xxii. 12. 14. (*c*) Isa. xlv. 25.

but the (*a*) Lamb that was slain is worthy; and my every particle of hope centers in him, in his covenant, in his obedience, cross, humiliation, and exaltation. For the sake of his agonies, take away my iniquities. For the sake of his righteousness, receive me graciously. And in the mantle of his imputed merit may I be (*b*) found; living, dying, at the judgment bar, and to all eternity.

(*a*) Rev. v. 12. (*b*) Phil. iii. 9.

# SERMON VIII.

## JOY IN HEAVEN OVER ONE REPENTING SINNER.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A

## DISCOURSE

PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. LUKE, OLD-STREET;

ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 29th, 1775.

Ye are come unto the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.—HEB. xii. 22, 23.

# SERMON VIII.

## LUKE xv. 7.

*Joy shall be in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance.*

REPENTANCE is one of those graces, without which there can be no salvation. It is an essential pre-requisite to spiritual peace on earth; and absolutely necessary, as a preparative for the eternal happiness of heaven. The reason is evident: viz. because every man is a fallen being. We must, therefore, by the effectual working of God's good Spirit, be made sensible of our fall; or we shall never feel our need of redemption and restoration from it, through the alone covenant grace of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Not that either repentance, or faith, or any of their practical fruits, are in the least respect casual, or conditional, or meritorious, of pardon, happiness, and eternal life. Every grace, and every good work, are the free gifts of God. From him only, "All holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, do proceed (*a*)." He it is who "grants us true repentance and his holy Spirit (*b*)." Consequently, we cannot possibly, in the very nature of things, merit (i. e. earn) or entitle ourselves to his favour, by any grace we exercise, or by any duty we perform. His gifts lay us under infinite obligations to him, instead of empowering us to merit any thing

(*a*) Second Collect at Evening Prayer. (*b*) Daily Form of Absolution.

from him. They do not render him a debtor to us, but render us unspeakable and everlasting debtors to him.

Therefore, when we say, that no man can be ultimately saved, without such and such qualifications; we do not mean, that those qualifications have any influence in obtaining our salvation (for inherent grace and eternal glory are already obtained, and infallibly secured to all God's elect, by the obedience and blood of Christ): but that those qualifications (as faith, repentance, and holiness of heart and life) are essential branches and indispensible evidences of this absolutely free salvation.

The argument may be illustrated thus. No person can attain to full maturity of manhood, until he has passed through the intermediate stages of infancy, childhood, and youth. And yet it would be very absurd, were we to say, that a state of manhood is merited by the previous states of youth, childhood, and infancy!—So, in order to the consummation of our recovery unto God, it is antecedently necessary, that we believe, repent, and resemble Christ in holiness. Yet faith, penitence, and sanctification, do not merit the kingdom of heaven, though we cannot reach that kingdom without them. According to the established order of grace, we must be endued with those spiritual gifts, before we can receive the gift of glorification to crown the whole. Just as, according to the established course of nature, we must be children, before we can be full-grown men.

In this only sense, then, it is, that the several graces of the blessed Spirit are so many pre-requisites to final salvation. All the links of the gospel chain are inseparable; but each ranks in its own order, and the concatenation is strictly regular. Inherent grace is the dawning of eternal glory; and eternal glory is the perfection of inherent grace. They are parts of one magnificent and undivided whole. Grace is the

earnest of glory: glory is the full possession of grace. Grace is the first fruits: glory, the unbounded harvest. And he that has the former, shall as certainly have the latter.

All religions except that of Christ Jesus, concur to place self-righteousness, as the ground or condition of obtaining the divine favour. Paganism, Popery, corrupted Judaism, Mahometism, Arminianism, differ they ever so much in some respects, most cordially agree in representing man as an helper, if not as a principal, in his own salvation. It is the gospel alone, whose proclamation runs, by grace [not by grace, considered as a sanctifying principle communicated to us; but by grace, considered as it is in God; viz. by his own unmerited, unconditioned, sovereign goodness] are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (*a*).

It is this that recommends, as well as distinguishes, the religion of our Lord; which had been no gospel, to the lost and to the fallen, but for the unmingled freeness, or absolute gratuitousness, with which all its blessings are bestowed. As Dr. Arrowsmith somewhere remarks, the mediatorial riches of Christ would have been so many dead commodities, "if it were not for needy, undone sinners, who take them off his hands."

I remember a just observation of good Mr. Hervey's: that, in the days of our Saviour's residence on earth, "the levee of that prince of peace consisted almost entirely, of the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." Hence it was asked, by his enemies, with an air of insult and contempt, have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him? But this people [ὁ ὀχλος οὗτος, this mob, this riff-raff, who follow him, and] who know not the law, are accursed (*b*).

(*a*) Eph. ii. 8, 9. (*b*) John vii. 48, 49.

Very few rulers, or people of eminent rank and station; few scribes, or men of distinguished parts and erudition; few pharisees, or seemingly rigid moralists; attended the ministrations, and were attached to the person of him who came to seek and to save them that are lost. No consideration can be more mortifying to human pride, than this infallibly certain truth; that harlots, and publicans, and sinners, i. e. many of those who were the meanest in rank, and whose antecedent lives had been of the most profligate stamp, were the very people who thirsted for his redemption, and composed his visible retinue. These were made partakers of his great salvation: and not one that trusted in his name, though vile as vileness itself, was ever sent empty away. So true is his own gracious declaration: All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise, nor on any account cast out (*a*).

Consult the first verse of the chapter from whence I have read you the text, and you will perceive what kind of persons they chiefly were, who frequented the ministry of God manifested in the flesh: Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners, to hear him. We never go to Christ, until his Spirit has beat us off from every other confidence, and driven us out of every other refuge. Under our first serious impressions, we usually try a variety of self-righteous expedients for our own relief. We have recourse to moral reformation, good resolutions, vows, long prayers, frequent church-goings, monthly sacraments; accompanied, perhaps, by a train of abstinences, austerities, and rigorous mortifications. While we do these things with a view to spin from them a justifying righteousness for ourselves, we are as absolute enemies to the gospel of Christ, and as far from the kingdom of God, as the

(*a*) John vi. 37.

devil and his angels. We must come, not as pharisees, but as publicans; not as scribes, but simply as sinners; if we would come, so as to be graciously received.

And be it carefully noticed, that they who were savingly led to Christ, experienced his renewing power, together with his forgiving grace. Though none were rejected for their past immoralities (how numerous, enormous, and aggravated soever); yet the reigning dominion of vice was from that hour, cancelled in them that believed. Thus for instance, the extortioner of Jericho was no sooner converted, than his rapacity and oppressiveness were exchanged for benevolence, justice, and liberality. The language of his heart, of his lips, and of his subsequent practice was, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and, if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold (*a*). Look also, at the harlot of Magdala. Though a slave to the impulse of no fewer than seven devils, during her unregenerate state; effectual grace no sooner causes her to believe in Jesus for salvation, than a sanctifying change ensues. She goes in peace, and sins as a prostitute no more (*b*).

And the scribes and pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. Pharisees always did, and always will, murmur at the gospel, and at them that preach it. They murmured at Christ himself; and no wonder, if their successors murmur against us. They can no more abstain from carping at the Christian scheme of grace, than some dogs can help barking when they hear the sound of a trumpet. This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them, said the Arminians of Judea: "This Messiah, as he calls himself, is a downright Antinomian. You may know him, by the company he keeps. He associates with the vilest of

(*a*) Luke xix 8. (*b*) Luke vii.

mankind; and doubtless, he himself is as bad as they." So reasoned the pharisees, concerning him who did no sin, but who went about doing good. And his own lips have taught us to expect, that they whose predecessors called the master of the house Beelzebub, will not be very candid and complaisant to them of his household (*a*).

True it is, that Christ received sinners and eat with them: that he received them with the most beneficent welcome, into the expanded arms of his compassion; and even admitted them to a state of intimate fellowship and friendship. And what he then did, he still does; and will go on to do, until the whole fulness of his mystical body is gathered in by grace, and perfected in glory. He receives sinners in a three-fold respect: (1.) As the donation of his Father, who elected them to salvation. (2.) At the hand of the holy Spirit, in effectual calling. (3.) He receives their souls at the hand of angels, in the hour of death.—To which may be added, that he will receive them in body and soul united, when he himself shall descend to change the living, and to raise the dead.

Christ was not insensible of the calumnies, with which the pharisees laboured to stain his character, for extending his mercy to the helpless, the unworthy, and the abandoned. He spake this parable to them: saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? Christ is a faithful and watchful shepherd. He will not suffer so much as one of his sheep to be finally lost. If an individual saint wander from the fold, Christ goes after that soul; and never ceases from his labour of love, until that soul is found. If you or I happen to lose any thing, on which we set a value; we may find it, or we may

(*a*) Matth. x. 25.

not: our search may issue in the recovery of the lost object, and it may all prove fruitless and unsuccessful. Herein is a very wide difference between God's seeking, and man's seeking. God never seeks in vain. An earthly shepherd may lose many a sheep, and lose them beyond retrieval. But Christ never lost a sheep, which he did not seek; and never sought a sheep, which he did not find.

And, when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. He does not suspend the return of the sheep, on the sheep's own free-will, (which would be very sheepish policy indeed); nor stand expostulating, and giving the sheep, what Arminianism would call, "a gentle pull" by the fleece: but actually lays hold on the wanderer; takes it up in his arms; layeth it upon his shoulders, by main strength; nor lets it go, until he has actually and finally brought it home. As all who seek his favour and an interest in his righteousness, are sure to find both one and the other; so all whom he seeks, are sure to be found of him.

And, when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours; saying, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. Our Lord himself applies and explains this part of the parable, in the words with which I began:

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.

Those, therefore, whom, in the preceding verse, Christ terms his friends and neighbours; and whom he calls upon to rejoice with him, on account of every conversion which his holy Spirit accomplishes below; are (1.) the elect angels, and (2.) the glorified souls of departed saints.

I firmly believe, upon the warrant of the text, that, as often as divine grace converts a single sin-

ner to Christ, the pleasing event is immediately known in heaven; and our great High Priest says, in effect, to the radiant throng that encircle his throne, Rejoice with me, for another of my lost sheep is found.

Indeed, there is nothing in heaven but joy. The peculiar presence of Deity, most eminently manifested there, is an endless and ever increasing source of blessedness, both to the spirits of the just, and to the seraphs that never fell. Where God is possessed; where Christ is seen; where the adorable Trinity pour forth their plenitude of glory, unclouded, on the delighted, undazzled view; where saints, the children of redemption, are the melodious songsters; and angels, the first fruits of creation, are the enraptured musicians; where the grand employ is praise, and Jehovah himself is the exceeding great reward; surely, there the cup of joy must overflow; and only the blest inhabitants themselves can tell, how blest the inhabitants are.

Is there then any thing that can heighten the celestial triumph? that can add to the felicity of those who stand in the divine presence, and enhance even their transcendent joy? There is: and we have just heard what it is. It is the regeneration of a fallen soul. It is the renewal of a sinner below. As our Lord expresses it at the tenth verse, There is joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth. No sooner is every fresh conversion made known on high, than additional joy is there. The memorable day is, if I may so speak, marked as a festival, in the calendar of heaven. Beatified saints exult, angels clap their wings, and the whole united choir raise their voices and strike their golden harps for joy, that a soul is born of God and made free of the Jerusalem which is above.

Such exalted hosannas would not resound on these occasions, among the inhabitants of the skies,

if the doctrine of final perseverance was untrue. Tell me, ye seraphs of light; tell me, ye souls of elect men made perfect in glory; why this exuberance of holy rapture, on the real recovery of a single sinner to God? Because ye know assuredly, that every true conversion is (1.) a certain proof, that the person converted is one of your own elect number: and (2.) that he shall be infallibly preserved and brought to that very region of blessedness, into which ye yourselves are entered. The contrary belief would silence your harps, and chill your praises. If it be uncertain, whether the person, who is regenerated to-day, may ultimately reign with you in heaven, or take up his eternal abode among apostate spirits in hell; your rejoicings are too sanguine, and your praises are premature. You should suspend your songs until he actually arrives among you; and not give thanks for his conversion until he has persevered unto glorification.

But there are no "election doubters," no perseverance deniers, in the kingdom of heaven. The happy spirits there, are as orthodox as the sun is bright. When a sinner repents they rejoice over him. Knowing, that he could not have repented, if he had not been elected: and that, as surely as he was elected, so surely shall he be glorified.

It is this which occasions the jubilee above. It is this which raises the harmonious concert high; which gladdens the shining hosts already saved; and puts a new song into their mouths, even accumulated thanksgiving unto God. They rejoice when they perceive the Redeemer's interest advanced, and the empire of the cross extended; when the communion of saints is enlarged, and when God's secret purposes of mercy have their open accomplishment in a sinner's visible accession to the kingdom of grace. For they are confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun the good work in that sin-

ner's heart, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ (*a*): and, consequently, that every man or woman upon earth, who repents after a godly sort, is an heir of the grace of life, and shall be their companions in blessedness to all eternity.

It is observable, that our Lord does not say, in general terms, Joy shall be in heaven, over sinners that repent: but, joy shall be in heaven, over one sinner that repenteth; i. e. over each penitent in particular. To show how dear the soul of a returning prodigal is to God; and with what eclats of triumphal joy the news of a conversion is received by the angels and the saints in light. For this, they sing their thanks in strains, sweet as perfect love can dictate, and high as admiring gratitude can wind them up.

Should it be enquired, "How the spirits of those who have died in the Lord, are able to know, and therefore to rejoice at, the penitence of their fellow-creatures on earth? I answer, that there is no occasion for our having recourse to, what some popish writers term, The glass of the Trinity; as if glorified saints literally saw all things in God, as in a looking-glass, or reflecting mirror. Such a conceit savours more of childish fancy, than of solid reason and scriptural authority. I rather suppose, that the departed spirits of believers receive their information, of what passes in this lower world, from the angels of God; who are watchful observers of sublunary events, and, as they were represented in Jacob's vision, are continually (*b*) ascending and descending, i. e. passing and repassing, from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven; charged with the performance of the divine commands, and acting as the instruments and commissioners of providence.—Hence they are termed, angels, or messengers; which is a name, not of nature, but of office.

(*a*) Philip. i. 6. (*b*) Genesis xxviii. 12.

These holy and powerful beings are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them [i. e. unto those of mankind, that shall be heirs of salvation (*a*). Numerous detachments of them are constantly, though invisibly, employed on earth as guardians of the elect, and sometimes as executioners of vengeance on the wicked. They carry up the glad tidings of a sinner's repentance, and communicate the intelligence to their companions above. By this means, probably, Joy is in heaven over the sinner that repenteth. Soon as the information circulates through the church triumphant, the universal hallelujah, which it occasions, is similar to the angelic hymn, sung at the Messiah's birth: Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!

But "What is that repentance, which induces the benevolent celestial choirs thus to rejoice over the sinner who repents?" The words μεταμεω and μετανοια, as they stand in the text now under consideration, seem to include something more than the word μεταμελεια always imports. (*b*) μεταμελεια literally and naturally signifies, an anxious and painful apprehension, arising from consciousness of preceding guilt. In this sense, an unregenerate and unreformed person may repent of having acted criminally, when he finds that his crimes are likely to be followed by consequences fatal to his interest and happiness. But the repentance here spoken of, is μετανοια: i. e. a change of mind, or regeneration, truly so called. That new birth and new heart, which are the gift of God, and the work of his Spirit. Where these take place, sorrow for sin,

(*a*) Hebrews i. 14.

(*b*) I am fully aware, that μεταμελεια and μετανοια are occasionally reciprocated, both in the sacred and in secular writings. I only mean to show, that St. Luke in the text, has made use of the most comprehensive and expressive terms, by which that repentance, which occasions joy in heaven, could be described.

hatred of sin, war against sin, and renunciation both of sinful self, and of righteous self, are the blessed and the certain consequences. The inward principle of evangelical repentance, is regenerating grace, or the habit of holiness supernaturally infused by the Spirit of God. The actings of evangelical repentance, or the experimental and practical ramifications of it, are those just now described. No man can spiritually repent, until he is born of God: and every man who is born of God, repents spiritually. When the Lord turns and looks upon us, in effectual calling, we are then turned, and look with mournings unto him whom our sins have pierced.

Thus, the first clause of the text is clear and obvious in its meaning. The saints above, and saints on earth, constitute in fact, but one church. St. Paul viewed them in a still closer connection, and styles them both one family (*a*). Nay, they form one mystic body; part of which (like Jacob's ladder) is on earth, and the other part in heaven. Hence they have but one common interest: and the efficacious drawing of a soul to Christ, by the Spirit and grace of God, is cause of triumph and rejoicing to those above. Jehovah himself is the converter of sinners. Acts of repentance, of humiliation, and of trust in the Mediator's righteousness, are the effects of that conversion. Attending angels are glad spectators and witnesses of the whole: and, on their return to the seat of the blessed, they diffuse the grateful intelligence, and all heaven resounds with acclamations to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain for us men and for our salvation.

The latter portion of the text seems to carry some embarrassment in it, and to have perplexed most of the commentators who have undertaken to explain it. That joy shall be in heaven over one

(*a*) Ephesians iii. 15.

sinner that repenteth, is very intelligible, on principles of scripture and of sound metaphysics. But that this joy should be more, than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance, involves a two-fold difficulty. For,

I. Are there any persons upon earth, so just, so holy, and so good, as to need no repentance? Certainly not. Nor did our Lord intend to convey any such idea. Christ, though perfect, was not a perfectionist. He truly said, concerning himself, that he always did those things which were pleasing to the Father (*a*): but he knew the depravation of human nature too well, to affirm as much concerning any other man. He utterly denied sinless perfection, as predicable of any earthly being, himself alone excepted. The purest action of the holiest believer in the world, needs more or less to be repented of. The great and good bishop Beveridge did not go a jot too far, in confessing to God, and in leaving that confession on record, "I cannot pray, but I sin: I cannot preach, but I sin: I cannot administer, nor receive the holy sacrament, but I sin. My very repentance needs to be repented of; and the tears I shed, want washing in the blood of Christ."

Incarnate truth, who taught us to pray for the forgiveness of our daily trespasses, can never be supposed to intimate, that any of us may be so far advanced in grace, as to have no daily trespasses to be forgiven. But, if we do not need repentance, we cannot need forgiveness: the necessity, both of forgiveness on God's part, and of repentance on ours, arising from our continued sinfulness in his sight. So that a man must be entirely sinless, and perfectly holy, ere the use and the exercise of repentance can be superseded. But there is not a just man upon

(*a*) John viii. 29.

earth, who doeth good and sinneth not (*a*). If, therefore, we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (*b*).

(1.) By the ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance (a certain number for an indefinite one), may be meant, the Jews in general; and, more especially, the Pharisees. These might be styled, just, or righteous persons, not because they were so in reality; but because they looked upon themselves to be such, wore the form of godliness, and carried their self-righteousness so far as even to dream that they needed no repentance. The Pharisees were perfectionists to a man. They held that it was possible to yield an unsinning obedience to the whole law of God: and it necessarily followed, that repentance was not only needless, but absurd and contradictory, in men who had reached the very pinnacle of rectitude, and who had no remaining iniquity to repent of.—Taking the passage in this sense, it ought to be (what it very fairly may) rendered thus: Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth (*c*); nor over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance: who are so extravagantly carried away by the delusions of self-opinion, as to forget that they need repentance for every thing they do.—The contrast is beautiful. One repenting sinner stands opposed to ninety-nine

(*a*) Eccl. vii. 20. (*b*) 1 John i. 8. (*c*) So η, and μαλλον η, frequently signify. For example: Καλεζη ιλος δεδικαιωμενος, η εκεινος. i. e. This man went down justified, not the other, Luke xviii. 14. Ηγαπησαν οι ανθρωποι μαλλον το σκοτος, η το φως. Men have loved darkness, not light, John iii. 19. Ει δικαιον εζιν ενωπιον τε Θεε, ὑμων ακεειν μαλλον η τε Θεε, κριναλε. Judge ye whether it be right before God to obey you, not God, Acts iv. 19. Πειθαρχειν δει Θεω, μαλλον η ανθρωποις. We ought to obey God, not men, Acts v. 29. Ὁ δε εκαλονλαρχος τω κυζερνηλη και τω ναυκληρω επειθελο, μαλλον η τοις ὑπο τε Παυλε λελομενοις. But the centurion gave credit to the captain and to the proprietor of the vessel, not to the things which Paul spake, Acts xxvii. 2. Φιληδονοι, μαλλον η φιλοθεοι. Lovers of pleasure, not lovers of God, 2 Tim. iii. 4.

legalists; and outweighs them all, in the divine estimation. The former occasions joy in heaven. The latter, though so greatly superior in point of number and of exterior attainments, yet occasion no joy at all among the denizons of glory. On the contrary, were the blessed susceptible of grief, they would weep at that proud blindness, which induces unrepenting sinners to prefer a cobweb to a coronation robe, by establishing their righteousness, instead of embracing the righteousness of Christ.

(2.) The words will bear yet another interpretation, and may be read as follows: Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, or is newly brought to God, more than over ninety and nine just persons, οἵτινες ϰ χρειαν ἐχουσι μετανοιας, who have no need of regeneration. For though believers need the influence of the Spirit to sanctify them more and more; they do not need the Spirit's influence to regenerate them over again. A soul once born of the Holy Ghost, is never unborn, from that day forward. The power of indwelling grace exerts and displays itself with increasing strength and brightness: but regeneration, or the infusion of spiritual life, neither needs nor can admit of repetition. It is a divine act, which, having once passed upon the soul, stands good for ever, and is physically incapable of reiteration. All subsequent revivals, whether in a way of holiness, support, or consolation, are but expansions of the original principle, occasioned by the holy Spirit's repeated breathings on the spark which he primarily inspired, and which nothing can totally extinguish. As many, therefore, as are evangelically just persons, or exalted to a state of justification before God; and are, moreover, born again (*a*) of that incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever; may be truly said, not

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 23.

to need regeneration; as being already, the renewed sons of God. But,

(3.) Why may not the passage admit of a still more elevated sense? What forbids us to understand by those just persons who need no repentance, the spirits of the righteous who have dropt their mortal bodies, are associated with angels, and shine in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb? These are completely sanctified, and therefore need no repentance. As every spot of sin is extirminated, so every tear is totally wiped away. They bear, unsullied, the image of God's holiness; and they experience, without allay, a plenitude of celestial happiness. Well may repentance cease, where faith itself is absorbed in sight.

II. But why more joy in heaven over a repenting sinner, than over a whole multitude of regenerated people, or even the whole army of glorified souls? I apprehend, that this is spoken entirely after the manner of men: among whom, the first transports of joy, for the retrieval of a lost valuable, sometimes resemble the swellings of a mighty river which overflows its banks, and impetuously carries all before it; whereas calm and unintermitted possession usually occasions that evenness of placid and settled satisfaction, which rises no higher than to the margin of the channel, and glides in a smooth, regular, complacent stream.

This point is finely illustrated, toward the close of the present chapter, in that tender and beautiful parable of the prodigal son: whose reformation and return gave rise to a spring-tide of parental and domestic rejoicing. Not because the father and his family had more affection for the reclaimed spendthrift, than for the other son, who had not wandered from home, nor dissipated his wealth: but because the repenting debauchee, who had been spiritually dead, was alive again, and he that had been morally lost, was found.

We may elucidate the turn of phrase now under consideration by another case, which I suppose, occurs in the course of almost every believer's own experience. The continued possession of the highest spiritual blessings is not, after a while, attended with that exuberance of gladness and sweet surprise, which accompanied and distinguished their first access to the soul. When the legal bondage of a convinced sinner is reversed, and he receives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (*a*); when the love of God is for the first time, clearly and feelingly shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost (*b*), and his perception of divine favour assures him, that he is passed from death unto life; then is he like unto them that dream (*c*). His lips teem with praise, and his heart expands with joy. He is quite engrossed by the glorious objects which ravish his delighted view; and he only lives, thinks, speaks, and acts, for God. Was the fervour of this (*d*) first love to continue without abatement, all the days of his pilgrimage, there would be very little difference between the joys of grace and those of glory. The happiness of saints on earth would almost equal the felicity of angels, and of souls in heaven.

This, therefore, I take to be the meaning of the text: that, though the spirits above reflect with adoring and incessant gratitude to God, on the innumerable conversions which his powerful grace hath already wrought; yet, the continued additions, which grace daily makes to the happy number, keep their benevolent thanksgivings in perpetual exercise, and they rejoice, in a special manner, over the sinner that was last converted to Christ. This view of things seems to coincide with that theory, which

(*a*) Isa. lxi. 3. (*b*) Rom. v. 5. (*c*) Psal. cxxvi. 1.
(*d*) Rev. ii. 4.

supposes the joy of the blessed to be in continual advance; and to rise, by infinite progression, to higher and higher degrees of still increasing felicity. A conjecture, which gives us the noblest and most enlarged idea which the human mind can well entertain, of the bliss which God has prepared for them that love him!

A few pertinent inferences shall close our present meditations.

1. To what has already been observed on the subject, let us add a word or two concerning the nature and effects of that repentance, which occasions joy among the angels of God, and is indissolubly connected with the salvation of the penitent himself.

While men continue strangers to that μεταvοια, or mental change, of which the text speaks; they heartily love, and eagerly pursue, the imaginary pleasures of sin. The understanding of a natural man is so darkened, as to mistake that for happiness, which is in fact essential misery. The darkness of his understanding necessarily perverts his will, so that he inevitably chooses evil in preference to good. A perverted will poisons the affections. And corrupt affections, if uncurbed by providential restraints, never fail to teem with the baneful fruits of practical immorality and licentiousness.

But no sooner is this very sinner changed by efficacious grace, or endued with repentance unto life (*a*); than his understanding, clouded before with the darkness of spiritual ignorance and unbelief, becomes light in the Lord (*b*). He sees that the favour and the resemblance of God constitute the supreme happiness of an immortal soul; that God's favour can flow to sinners through the channel of Christ's redemption only; and that God's resemblance can be re-communicated to the fallen, by no other effi-

(*a*) Acts xi. 18. (*b*) Eph. v. 8.

ciency, than the interior operation of the Holy Ghost, causing old things to be done away, and making all things become new (*a*).

This supernatural illumination of the understanding (which seems to be the initial point of regeneration, or the first effect of converting grace on the mind) conciliates the will to holiness. The soul chooses God for its portion, loves him as its happiness, and ardently aspires to that sanctification which qualifies for heaven.

The affections are now centripetals; or, through the power of divine attraction, tend to God in Christ, and repose in him as the centre and source of love, the Alpha and Omega of rational and refined desire. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire in comparison of thee (*b*).

A sinner, thus enlightened and thus renewed, cannot but feel sorrow and remorse for all his past and present deviations from the law of God. The depravity of his nature, and the transgressions of his life, fill him with serious, poignant, perpetual humiliation. Being led by grace to the fountain of living waters, he deeply laments his having so long endeavoured to hew out unto himself broken cisterns which can hold no water (*c*): and wonders, how he could be so blinded and so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (*d*), as to seek for satisfaction in the ways of death; and madly dream, that his happiness would improve, in proportion as he strayed from God.

Above all, when he finds that the expiation of his guilt, and his redemption from the damnation of hell, could be effected at no less expence, than by the miraculous incarnation and most bitter death of God's co-equal Son;—oh, how powerfully does this

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 17. (*b*) Psal. lxxiii. 25.
(*c*) Jer. ii. 13. (*d*) Heb. iii. 13.

induce the soul to (*a*) sorrow after a godly sort! what carefulness and concern does it work in the heart! what self-indignation! what fear of God! what vehement desire of forgiveness! what zeal for holiness! what revenge and abhorrence of sin! These, these are the properties of genuine repentance. These, these are the evidences of our engrafture into Christ. Joy is in heaven over such repentance as this. God the Father acquiesces with complacency, in the soul that is thus brought to his mercy-seat. The glorified Redeemer sees the reward of his mediatorial obedience unto death, and is satisfied. The holy Spirit smiles on his own work, hastens to comfort the sinner he has subdued, and goes on to accomplish the sanctification he has began.

Every sigh which the penitent breathes is treasured up; and every tear he sheds is noted down. His prayers are consecrated, and wafted to the throne, by the incense of Immanuel's intercession. And, at the destined time, he shall ascend on the wings of angels, to his seat in paradise; where kindred spirits, who rejoiced at his conversion here, will congratulate his happy arrival there.

2. Remember, that evangelical repentance is a very different thing from merely outward reformation. King Herod (*b*) reformed his conduct in many particulars; but he does not appear to have experienced that regenerating influence, alluded to by our Lord in the text. A man may reform without true repentance; though no man can truly repent without moral reformation. Reformation whitewashes the house: regeneration takes the house to pieces, and rebuilds it from the ground. Reformation varnishes the outside of the vessel: regeneration melts the vessel down, and casts it into a new mould.

(*a*) 2 Cor. vii. 11. (*b*) Mark vi. 20.

3. Gospel repentance can never agree with self-righteousness. He alone is the scripture penitent, who feels that he has no goodness, not so much as a righteous thread of his own, wherein to stand before the Judge of all. Repentance, like faith, renounces itself; nor dreams of its ever being able to enter into the composition of that wedding garment, which entitles the wearer to a seat at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Pharisees roll themselves up in the mantle of their supposed good works, as a spider entrenches itself in a web of its own spinning: but where repentance is wrought, the hail of the law sweeps away the refuge of lies (*a*), and drives the ejected sinner to the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Until you see that you cannot be saved by the moral law; and that you never did, nor ever can perform your duty, either to God or your neighbour, in the manner and with the extent which the law requires; as the Lord liveth, you have not yet experienced what Bible repentance means.

4. If you repent indeed, you will repent practically; by labouring to depart from iniquity, and by ordering your conversation aright. Though we are not saved for our holiness, yet holiness and good works are inseparable attendants on that grace of God which brings salvation. Any repentance which leaves us short of this, is counterfeit and nothing worth.

5. We may perhaps indirectly infer from the passage we have been considering, that angels and saints in glory, are acquainted with each other. If not a single conversion obtains on earth, which is not known among the inhabitants of the upper world; and if those dignified spirits express a friendship for every repenting sinner, by rejoicing over him, and by giving thanks to God on his behalf;

(*a*) Isai. xxviii. 17.

does it not seem more than probable, that social knowledge, intercourse, and harmony, constitute no small portion of that felicity which is at God's right hand for ever?

6. Observe too, that angels are present with us when we know it not. Not only the Deity himself, but also his ministering spirits, are about our bed, and about our path, and spy out all our ways: though our eyes are withheld, that we cannot discern the millions of immaterial beings, who throng our atmosphere. There is, therefore, no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves (*a*). As the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; so his angels likewise, disperse themselves at his command, beholding and noticing whatever is done among men.

7. If repentance and conversion be so amiable in the estimation of these holy, unembodied spectators; what ineffable abhorrence must they conceive, when witnesses to the commission of sin! Hence the Jews had a proverb, when an Israelite sins, the angels weep. And St. Austin has a similar observation: "Quoties benè agimus, gaudent angeli, et tristantur dæmones. Quoties à bono deviamus, diabolum lætificamus, et angelos tuos suo gaudio defraudamus:" i. e. As often as we do well, angels exult, and satan grieves: as often as we commit evil, we make satan glad, and defraud the angels of their joy. Striking reflection! strongly calculated to impress us with detestation of vice, and incite us to the pursuit of virtue! Greatly superior to that topic, beautiful as it was, from whence the heathen poet derived an argument against the prevailing immoralities of Rome:

———*Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes*
*Intendunt oculos.*———

(*a*) Job xxxiv. 22.

8. Observe, and imitate, the amiable benevolence which glows in angelic bosoms. The peers of heaven are certain that their own salvation is secure. They know that they were loved and elected of God from all eternity; and that, through the efficacy of his confirming grace, they shall never be suffered to deviate from his image, nor to lapse into condemnation. Was their continuance in happiness at all dependent on the conversion of man, self-interest would sufficiently account for those strains of sympathetic joy, with which they celebrate the repentance, or initial salvation, of Adam's revolted sons. But, if the whole human race were to perish, the dignity of the unfallen angels would still remain unimpaired, their safety unshaken, and their glory unobscured. It is love, therefore, ardent and refined as their own exalted natures; it is benignity, pure as æther, and disinterested as the shining of the sun; which induce those beneficent intelligences to adopt our concerns, and consider human happiness as an addition to their own.

Yet what is the benevolence of angels themselves, when compared with the philanthropy manifested by Jesus Christ! To rejoice at the salvation of sinners, comes easily within the compass of created friendship. But to merit that salvation, by such a series of sufferings, as no mere creature could have undergone, nor will ever be able fully to comprehend and acknowledge, was the matchless effect of infinite compassion, and of kindness properly divine.

Impressed, softened, and assimilated, by the force of these examples, may our bosoms kindle with the fire of celestial affection, and the arms of our charity be expanded wide, like the arms of Jesus when he hung upon the cross! Let every man seek another's welfare (*a*); rejoicing with them that rejoice,

(*a*) 1 Cor. x. 24.

and weeping with them that weep (*a*). Who of us is most angelic? Or (which is a still more important question), who among us has drank deepest into the Spirit of Christ? He that is most mild, most liberal, most benevolent, most tender-hearted, most forgiving, most glad of another's felicity, most actively subservient to the temporal and spiritual wants of men. He that is readiest to every good word and work: who not only improves, but seeks all opportunities of promoting the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the happiness of his neighbour.

9. As angels are invisibly dispersed over the planet we inhabit, and expatiate in the atmosphere which surrounds us; so I cannot doubt, that they bear an especial part in the solemnities of our public worship, and note with peculiar attention whatever passes in the house of God.

We are expressly assured, by an unerring pen, that the mysteries of man's redemption and restoration are things which the angels desire to look into (*b*). Though they themselves, having never fallen from their primitive rectitude, do not stand in need of an atoning sacrifice and a righteousness imputed; yet they wish to be more and more conversant with, in order that they may more and more admire the covenant of grace, as carried into a complete execution by the correspondent work and sufferings of Christ.

There is a remarkable passage, which gives us to understand, that (*c*) the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, know by the church, the manifold wisdom of God; or, that the various ranks of angelic beings, rise gradually, into clearer and more enlarged acquaintance with the divinely concerted plan of human salvation: partly, by observing the

(*a*) Rom. xii. 15. (*b*) 1 Pet. i. 12. (*c*) Eph. iii. 10.

tenor of God's gracious dealings with the souls he regenerates; and partly, by attending to those sublime truths which Christ's faithful ministers dispense, when they preach his gospel in the congregation of the saints. I question, whether there be an individual minister upon earth, who declares the whole counsel of God with power, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven (*a*); but listening angels are a part of his auditory, and sometimes reap instruction from the lips of a mortal man. Even the private conversations of God's people, when they speak together concerning what he has done for their souls (*b*), and build up each other on their most holy faith (*c*), as companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ (*d*); at such seasons of religious fellowship, do not hovering angels join the company? and may they not derive real improvement, as well as matter of rejoicing, from the spiritual experiences of saints?

10. But there are multitudes of persons (and perhaps more than a few now under this very roof), who never yet occasioned joy in heaven among the angels of God; but, by the unbelief and hardness of their impenitent hearts, have gratified the angels of the bottomless pit, times and ways without number. Yet, even you shall be received, if you come, as sinners, to the sinners' friend. May God's Spirit bend the gospel bow, and wing an arrow to your hearts! Which of you is willing to make joy in heaven this morning? Over what repenting soul shall the angels of God triumph? For whom shall Gabriel sing, and Raphael strike his harp? All heaven shall exult on your account, if you close with Christ as your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 12. (*b*) Psalm lxvi. 16. (*c*) Jude xx.
(*d*) Rev. i. 9.

11. I would hope that some penitents are here: some, in whom that gracious word has had its accomplishment, They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born (*a*). Come, then, to the Son of God, for the merit that saves. Look to the Spirit of grace, for the influence that sanctifies. The lower you fall at the feet of Christ crucified, the louder praises are angels singing for you above. Be glad therefore, and of good courage. God will never be exceeded by angels, in loving kindness, and in tender mercies. He will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee (*b*).

12. Are any backsliders hearing me to-day? any, who having formerly known the good ways of God, are now become careless and forgetful of the things belonging to their peace? May this be the set time for your revival and return. God your Redeemer says, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, i. e. come out from among your evil companions, renounce your sinful connections, revert to the people and to the ordinances of God! and Christ shall give thee light (*c*): he will restore to thee comforts of his Spirit, and the joy of his salvation, and thou shalt again sing in the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord (*d*). Stay, O stay no longer, from thy happiness! he who received thee once, will receive thee anew, and angels shall rejoice over thee afresh, if the cry of thy heart be this, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now (*e*).

(*a*) Jer. xxxi. 9. (*b*) Isa. xxx. 19. (*c*) Eph. v. 14.
(*d*) Psalm cxxxviii. 5. (*e*) Hos. ii. 7.

13. As joy is in heaven, on account of one sinner that is born again, by spiritual regeneration, into the kingdom of grace below; great must be the joy, when a regenerated soul, loosed from the pains and dishonours of its earthly prison, is born at death, into the kingdom of glory above. Every saint, at his departure out of the body, is carried off, and carried up, by angels, into Abraham's bosom (*a*): admitted to the sight of Christ, and introduced to the fellowship and familiarity of spirits that never fell, and of spirits completely restored from their fall. Who can describe the joy, which obtains in heaven, on such felicitating occasions as these? The glorified soul himself rejoices, that the imaginary bitterness of death is past, and that he is safely arrived at the house not made with hands. Saints who were antecedently landed on the shores of immortality, welcome their blood-bought brother to his throne. Angels, who had been spectators of his conversion upon earth, and who lately acted as vehicles to convey him to glory, congratulate his admission into the mansions of bliss.

With profoundest reverence be it added, that all the three Persons in the Godhead rejoice, when the infallible designs of eternal love are glorified in the actual and ultimate salvation of a chosen sinner. As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so will the Lord thy God rejoice over thee. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hands of the Lord; and a royal diadem in the hands of thy God (*b*). The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thy enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more.—The Lord thy God, in the midst of thee, is mighty. He will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love. He will joy over thee with singing (*c*).

(*a*) Luke xvi. (*b*) Isa. lxii. 3. 5. (*c*) Zeph. iii. 15. 17.

14. Still higher will be the joy in heaven, when the whole assembly of the elect, without one absentee, shall meet, and reign, and shine, and sing together, and

"*walk with God,*
*High in salvation and the climes of bliss.*"

But I must let the curtain drop. Who can paint what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive? May free grace give us at last to know, by triumphant experience, what this blessedness means!

15. In order to that most desirable end, let those of us who have not yet repented, beg of God to grant us, and to work in us, the exceeding great and precious grace of effectual calling. Let those in whom repentance is wrought, beseech the Holy Ghost to deepen it, day by day; and enable us in every part of our lives and conversations, to bring forth fruits suitable to repentance (*a*). In this case, angels will rejoice over us whilst we live, and when we die. Happy prelude, to our endless rejoicing with them in the heaven of heavens!

Thither, O Saviour of sinners, may thy blood and righteousness bring us. Thither may thy holy Spirit guide us, and thy intercession keep us. Even unto Mount Sion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, who were written in heaven; and to God, the judge of all; and to the souls of just men, made perfect; and to thyself, the mediator of the new covenant (*b*). In the hour of death, smile and shine upon us. Revive us with an application of those comfortable words,

(*a*) Mat. iii. 8. (*b*) Heb. xii. 22. 24.

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness, shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory (*a*). Yea, seal us to that place, prepared for us before the foundations of the world; and concerning which, thou hast told us (*b*), The glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

(*a*) Isa. lx. 19. (*b*) Rev. xxi. 23.

# SERMON IX.

## *The Existence and the Creed of Devils Considered:*

WITH

## *A Word concerning Apparitions.*

A

# DISCOURSE

PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. OLAVE, JEWRY;

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, October 29th, 1775.

And the Lord said unto satan, whence comest thou? Then satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down in it.—JOB i. 7.

My name is legion: for we are many.—MARK v. 9.

# SERMON IX.

JAMES ii. 19.

*Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doest well. The devils also believe, and tremble.*

ONE grand motive which induced St. James to write this epistle, was, to stifle and repress a most dangerous error, which, even in the apostolic times, began to gain ground among too many reputed followers of Christ.

This error was, that a mere naked assent to the truths of Christianity, considered as a doctrinal system, without having the heart affected, and without having the life sanctified, would be sufficient evidence of their salvation, and prove them children of God.

Against this most dangerous delusion, the blessed apostle James drew his pen. And the principal drift of this epistle, is, not to counteract St. Paul (for all the divine writers speak one uniform, harmonious language): but, merely to show the delusion which the Gnostics, who were the Antinomians of that age, were under; and to prove, that mere head knowledge, is requisite to stamp us heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Hence we find the apostle, at the 14th verse, asking, What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? Observe, with what caution St. James expresses himself. He does not say, "what will it profit a man, to have faith without works?"

for he knew that to be impossible. But the words are, What will it profit a man, to say that he hath faith, without works? There is a vast difference, between believing, and saying we believe. The man who professes himself a believer, must offer something more solid than his own ipse dixit, than a mere verbal profession, if he wishes to be credited by those to whom that profession is made. Was I to affirm, that I am possessed of a neat hundred thousand per annum, not one of you would believe me. And why? because I have nothing to show for it. I have no writings to produce, as my authentic vouchers. By the same rule, when a man comes to you or me, and says, I have faith; it is very natural for us to ask, Where are your works? If thou hast faith, thou hast it to thyself before God. Faith is a hidden principle, until rendered visible by a holy life and conversation. What does it profit a man barely to say that he has faith? It profits a man much to have faith; for, if he has faith, he will also have a life correspondent to the holiness of that leading grace. Indeed, a man can never be holy till he has faith. To them, says Christ, who are sanctified by faith that is in me.—There is no such thing as real holiness without faith; and there is no such thing as true faith without holiness. These two always go together; and none, but a visionary self-deceiver, or an intentional hypocrite, would ever wish to put them asunder. Can faith, that is, can a bare profession of faith, save him, or prove him to be in a saved state? Far from it. Profession will only sink us deeper into condemnation at last, unless God give us to feel and to possess those graces, to which our lips lay claim. Here, a Pharisee may step in, and ask, But will not works save us? Indeed they will not. Will not faith and works together save us? No. Faith is the evidence, not the cause of salvation: just as works are the evidences, not the cause of faith.

I observed, at another end of the town, this morning, and I will repeat the observation here: That the religion of Jesus Christ stands eminently distinguished, and essentially differenced, from every other religion that was ever proposed to human reception, by this remarkable peculiarity: that, look abroad in the world, and you will find, that every religion, except one, puts you upon doing something in order to recommend yourself to God.

A Mahometan expects to be saved by his works. A Socinian thinks to go to heaven by his works. A Papist looks to be justified by his works. A Freewiller hopes for salvation by his works, compliances, endeavours, and perseverance. A Pagan, if he believes that there is a future state, expects to be happy hereafter, by virtue of the supposed good he does, and of the evil he leaves undone. A Mystic has the same hope, and stands on the same sad foundation. It is only the religion of Christ, which runs counter to all the rest, by affirming, that we are saved, and called with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to the Father's own purpose and grace, which was [not sold out to us on certain conditions to be fulfilled by ourselves, but was] given us, in Christ, before the world began (*a*). It was long ago remarked by a good man, that "It is the business of all false religions, to patch up a righteousness, in which the sinner is to stand before God." But it is the business of the glorious Gospel, to bring near to us, by the hand of the holy Spirit, a righteousness ready wrought; a robe of perfection ready made; wherein God's people, to all the purposes of justification and happiness, stand perfect and without fault before his throne.

You may object, "if that is the case, if we are saved and justified entirely by a righteousness im-

(*a*) 2 Tim. i. 19.

puted, to what purpose are those good works, which the Bible every where inculcates, and which the chapter, from whence the text has been read, so particularly enforces the practice of?" I answer, that, as robes and a coronet do not constitute a peer, but are ensigns and appendages of his peerage (for the will of the sovereign is the grand efficient cause, which elevates a commoner to noble rank); and as the very patent of creation is only an authentic manifesto, not casual, but declarative of the king's pleasure to make his subject a nobleman: just so, good works do not make us alive to God; nor justify us before him; nor exalt us to the dignity and felicity of celestial peerage: they are but the robes, the coronet, and the manifesto, shining in our lives and conversations; and making evident, to all around us, that we are, indeed, and in truth, chosen to salvation, justified through Christ, and renewed by the Holy Ghost.

I need not apprise you, that the generality of those who are dead to God, either think, or pretend to think, that we who preach, and you who believe, absolute salvation by the finished atonement, and the finished obedience of Jesus Christ, rested on by faith alone; are "opening the floodgates to licentiousness, and annihilating the necessity of good works."

I would wish you to notice the inconsistency of those objections, with which worldly people assail the gospel of the grace of God (*a*). One while, they tell us, that we are righteous overmuch, and are more godly than we need to be. At another time, we are for no good works at all, but make void the law through faith. Now, these two cavils, effectually, and primâ facie, demolish each other, like two equal contrary forces in natural philosophy. Would it not be very absurd, if I was to say

(*a*) Acts xx. 24.

of a lady, that she is literally, as strait as an arrow, and as crooked as a rainbow?

They who are acquainted with themselves, with the love of Christ, and with the holiness of the moral law, know and feel, that, so far from doing too much, they can never do enough for God. This knowledge and persuasion effectually cut up the two incoherent objections abovementioned. On one hand, we cannot, even in speculation, be negligent of good works; since we consider, and are zealous for them, as the grand visible indications of our appointment to eternal glory.—On the other, a sense of those immense deficiencies which attend our best obedience, operates as a most powerful inducement to the unintermitted performance of as much good as we can. Not that we are hereby justified. For as I have often asked (and I shall continue to reiterate the question, as long as I can speak for God); where is the man that ever fulfilled the law of God? Let us only bring ourselves to the test of the second table, whose precepts are all summed up in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Since the fall, no man ever did this, but Jesus Christ.

As I was going through Holborn, the other day, I saw a house on fire. The mob were assembled, and the engines were playing. I felt, with great tenderness, for the immediate sufferers. Yet it instantly occurred to me, that I was not so deeply concerned, as when I lately saw my own house in a similar danger. What was the reason? Because I do not love my neighbour as myself. And, was there nothing else, to exclude me from justification by my own righteousness, I should know, from this circumstance alone, that it is utterly impossible for me to be accepted of God, and entitled to heaven, through my defective conformity to the moral law.

In the prosecution of his argument, St. James puts a very obvious case: a case, which, I am afraid,

happens almost every day. If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace! be ye warmed and filled! notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what does it profit? Intimating, that, as a string of smooth, canting words, unaccompanied by substantial relief, conveys no service to a distressed petitioner, and is no decisive proof of benevolence in the speaker; so, an empty, unactive profession of faith, without a heart and life devoted to God, and to the good of mankind, will stand us in no stead at all. The apostle himself makes the application: even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Are we to infer from this, that works cause us to live, in the sight of God? No. It would sound very odd in your ears, and with very good reason, if I was to affirm, that I am therefore alive, because I have the honour of preaching before you this afternoon: no. My preaching does not make me alive. It only shows that I do live. Since, if I did not live, I could neither move, nor speak, nor act. In like manner, holy works do not endue us with life.—— They only prove us to be spiritually alive, if the Spirit of God has enabled us, from right principles, and to right ends, thus to bring forth fruit to his honour and praise.

The goodness of the fruit does not make, but discover and declare, the goodness of the tree: since, if this were not good, it could not produce good fruit. The purity of a stream does not make the fountain pure, but proves it to be so. All that we can possibly say and do for God, contribute not one jot or tittle to the acquisition either of spiritual or of eternal life, but only make known that he has infused into our souls the breath of supernatural regenerating grace, by the powerful ministration of the Holy Ghost.

A man may say, adds the apostle, thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works: as much as to say, I defy thee to do it: faith can only be shown by the good works which it produces. Therefore, I will show thee (and every true believer says the same) I will show thee my faith, by my works: I will adduce these, to demonstrate the reality of that.

Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doeth well: this is very right, so far as it goes: but remember, that the devils also believe this, together with a great deal more, and tremble. The faith of a deist (which is all ultimately resolvable into this solitary article, I believe that there is one God) is, at best, but a small part of the devil's creed; and, if it proceed no farther will leave the soul infinitely short of everlasting salvation.

In the text, there are three objects of enquiry:

I. Who are the devils here mentioned?

II. What it is that they believe, and how far their faith goes?

III. In what respects their faith differs from the faith of God's elect, or from that faith which the holy Spirit breathes into every converted heart?

I. By the devils here referred to, we are doubtless to understand that whole body of apostate spirits, whose names were not in the book of life, and who were therefore permitted to fall from that state of holiness, dignity, and happiness, in which they were originally made.

Our text styles them devils, δαιμονια: probably, from their depth of skill, and from the exquisite subtilty of their knowledge. At what precise point of time the angels, and these among the rest, were created; and whether their creation was successive, or simultaneous; cannot perhaps, be exactly ascertained from scripture: which only informs us, at large, that, within the first six days, the heavens

and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. St. Austin thinks, that the angels were called into being, when God said, Let there be light. And it seems extremely certain, from a passage in the book of Job, that the angels were created before our part of the universe, or that terraqueous globe which we inhabit, was completely formed into its present state. For we read, that no sooner was this portion of our own solar system moulded into its present scheme, than angels admired the fabric, and blessed the builder. Whereupon are the foundations of [the earth] fastened? or who laid the corner-stone thereof? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy (*a*). Who were those morning stars? Who were those sons of God? The angels of light; styled morning stars, from their purity, their dignity, their excellency, and glory; and sons of God, because they were of God's own immediate creation.

It is likewise plain, that the fall of a vast number of these unembodied spirits, was antecedent to the fall at least, if not to the creation of man. For we read, in the only authentic account of the origin of evil, any where extant, that one of these apostate spirits was the being, who, in a borrowed form, seduced the mother of the human race.

Should it be asked, "How came any part of those angels, who were created in such a state of natural and moral excellence, to make shipwreck of their holiness, of their majesty, and of their joy?" I answer, that the origin of evil, whether among angels (with whom evil seems strictly to have originated), or among men, is the most difficult question, perhaps, and the most mysterious part of the divine conduct, that ever yet presented itself to human investigation. Clouds and darkness are the seat of its

(*a*) Job xxxviii. 6, 7.

residence; though wisdom, goodness, and justice, were certainly (in a manner unknown to us) the motives to its permission.

It becomes us, probably, on such an occasion as this, to repress the sallies of imagination, and to clip the wings of idle curiosity. It may be, that we cannot answer the question in better words, than in those of our Lord, Even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight. We may, perhaps, venture to surmise, that, according to our present views and apprehensions of things, the divine perfections could not have been manifested in equal glory and to equal advantage, if nothing but absolute and uniform good had universally and immutably prevailed. I was greatly pleased, some days ago, with the remark of a pious and learned friend, who, in the course of our free conversation on this subject, observed, that, "Had evil never been permitted, how could the justice of God have been glorified, in punishing it? How could the wisdom of God have been displayed, in overruling it? How could the goodness of God have been manifested, in pardoning and forgiving it? And how could the power of God have been exerted, in subduing it?" Here, probably, is our ne plus ultra, on this subject; until we ripen into that fulness of knowledge, which awaits us at God's right hand. Until our disimprisoned spirits rise into a superior state, it becomes us to confess our ignorance and incompetency, and to address the uncreated cause of all things, in those words of (I think) good bishop Hooper, a few moments before his martyrdom, "Lord, I am darkness, but thou art light!"

Should it be enquired, What particular crime it was, which drew on the fallen angels that indignation and wrath, that tribulation and anguish, which, we read, will be their portion? we are not, perhaps,

altogether in the dark as to that. For where St. Paul observes, that (*a*) a bishop should not be a novice; [νεοφυτος, newly converted, or lately implanted into Christ], but a person of gravity, and wisdom, and long experience in the ways of God; the reason assigned, is, lest a raw, unfledged bishop, being lifted up with pride, should fall into the condemnation of the devil. From whence it seems, that pride and self-admiration were the immediate sins, which rendered satan and his angels obnoxious to the vengeance of the Almighty.

St. Jude likewise, in the 6th verse of his epistle, gives us some insight into the nature of the sin committed by those degenerate spirits. The angels, says he, who kept not their first estate, (την ε'αυτων αρχην, their own proper and original principality) but left their own habitation; who were not satisfied with that rank in the scale of being, and with that degree of knowledge, dignity, and bliss, assigned them by creating wisdom, but left their own station, and deserted the post in which their Maker placed them; he has reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day. Whence we may soberly conclude, that the original sin of the apostate angels was a compound of pride on one hand; and of murmuring on the other.

Discontent is the daughter of pride. Every discontented heart is a proud heart. Instead of being angry with providence, for not making us greater than we are; the meanest person of us all, if he rightly knew himself and God, would fall low at his footstool, and adore him, for condescending to bestow any thought upon us, or to take any care of us, whatever. As I once heard a valuable person remark, "God is often better to us, than our fears; and always better to us than we deserve."——We should be perfectly at ease, under every possible

(*a*) 1 Tim. iii. 6.

combination of circumstances, if we could but give credit, to infinite wisdom, for doing all things well (*a*).

Some there are in the world, who sagely laugh at the very mention of devils. These illuminated rationalists cannot bring themselves to believe, that there are any such beings. Let me, therefore, just drop a cursory hint, as to the scriptural evidences, and the philosophic reasonableness of the article now in question.

(1.) There is nothing unscriptural in that doctrine which asserts the real and literal existence of degraded and malevolent unembodied spirits, who retain, amidst all the losses and horrors inseparable from their fallen state, a very extensive portion of knowledge, subtilty, and power. The Bible is so far from denying this, that, from the first to the last of the inspired books, it gives us a large account both of these spirits themselves, and of their various operations. Yea, the Bible is the only source from whence any thing certain can be gathered, concerning their existence, their history, and their activity.

(2.) There is nothing unphilosophical in the scripture account of these nefarious agents. The whole universe consists of matter and spirits. The positive existence of matter (though it be incapable of absolute demonstration, strictly so called, yet) will not admit of a moment's reasonable doubt: and with regard to spirit, we must commence atheists at once, ere we can deny the real existence of that. God the Father is an unembodied spirit.

(*a*) "Presumptuous man! the reason would'st thou find,
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask, of thy mother earth, why oaks were made
Taller and stronger than the weeds they shade?
Or ask, of yonder argent fields above,
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?"

God the Son, prior to his incarnation, was an unembodied spirit. God the Holy Ghost is an unembodied spirit. Angels are unembodied spirits. The glorified souls of the departed elect are disembodied spirits.

Moreover, by the same rule, that there are good unembodied spirits; why may there not be evil unembodied spirits? Where is the absurdity of this belief? (I now consider it merely in a *rational point of view). If it be atheism, to deny the existence of good unembodied spirits; then is it not totally unreasonable, to deny the existence of bad unembodied spirits?

We know that there are good embodied spirits, and bad embodied spirits upon earth, viz. good men and women, and bad men and women. Now, what is a man, or a woman? an immaterial ray, if I may so speak, united to a machine of dust; a deathless spirit, implunged in a mass of dying matter. And why may not that spirit exist, when the matter is dropped? That matter, which is so far from ennobling, that, at the best of times, it hangs as a dead weight upon the incarnated angel within!

I will go still further; and declare it as my stedfast and mature belief, not only that there are unembodied spirits; but also that, upon some special occasions, unembodied spirits and disembodied spirits have been permitted, and may again, to render themselves visible and audible.

There is nothing absurd in the metaphysical theory of apparitions. I do not suppose, that one story, in an hundred of this kind, is true. But I am speaking, as to the naked possibility of such phænomena. And this I am satisfied of, that, if a spirit (like mine or yours for instance), even while shut up in a prison of flesh, can render itself and its operation perceptible to other spirits, through the

medium of the senses; and if the bodily powers, quick and acute as they are in some men, be at best but very incommodious engines of mental action, and (on the sum total) rather clog and impede and embarrass both the faculties and the exertions of the soul, which yet can do such great things, even while in connection with so feeble and depressing a vehicle as now hangs about us; where is the unreasonableness of believing (yea, how great is the unreasonableness of not believing) that a soul, disimprisoned and disentangled from this burden of the flesh, is (so far from losing the powers it had) abundantly more at liberty to make itself perceived, than when it was connected into one compositum with a material habitation?

As I have ventured, with that intentional humility which becomes me, to set before you my judgment concerning the doctrine of apparitions; permit me, a moment longer, to digress from the immediate subjects of our text, while I remind you of two very remarkable scripture examples, quite in point to the case in hand.

(1.) Eliphaz, the Temanite, gave the following relation of a spectre, which he himself both saw and heard (*a*). In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not (distinctly and perfectly) discern the form thereof: (I can only say in general terms, that) an image was before mine eyes. There was silence (deep and solemn, all around, while the spirit spake); and I heard a voice, saying, shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Or, as others render it, shall mortal man

(*a*) Job iv. 13, &c.

be just before God? shall man be pure in the presence of his Maker? No: nothing can constitute us just in his eyes, but the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness. Nor can any thing restore us, inchoatively on earth, and completely in heaven, to the purity of God's image, but the omnipotent agency of God's sanctifying Spirit.

(2.) Carry back your views to our Lord's transfiguration on mount Tabor (*a*), and you will read of, not one only, but two persons, who descended for a while from heaven to earth, appearing visibly to, and conversing audibly with, the Son of God and three of his disciples.—As Jesus prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and glittering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared, in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

From such holy, from such happy, from such glorified beings, as Moses and Elias; I revert, for the present, to those malignant spirits, of whom our text speaks; to the devils, who believe and tremble. Spirits of a very different cast from those above! Spirits, who are bound down under the chains of divine providence, and now imprisoned at large, in the atmosphere that surrounds our globe, till the great audit comes, when they shall be turned into hell, together with all who forget God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. I now proceed to the second enquiry: viz. What it is that these devils believe? and how far their faith goes?

To which I answer, in general, that the devils are incomparably more orthodox, than 19 in 20 of our modern divines. Do you think there is such a being,

(*a*) Luke ix. 29, 30, 31.

as an Arian devil? or a Socinian devil? or a Sabellian? Is there an Anti-Trinitarian among the devils? or an Arminian? or a Pelagian? No. They endeavour to seduce men into those heresies; but they are too well informed, to be speculatively heterodox themselves.

They believe the existence of God, and that God is one. So the text may be rendered: Thou believest, ὁτι ὁ Θεὸς εἷς ἐστὶ, that God is one in nature and essence: the devils likewise believe as much; and that in the unity of this Godhead, there is a co-existence of Three distinct, eternal, consubstantial, and equal Persons.

Satan and his angels believe also, and tremble in believing, that the second of the Divine Persons assumed the nature of man; and by the perfection of his obedience and atonement, secured the justification and completed the redemption of every elect sinner.

They know, too, that the covenant-office and business of the Holy Ghost, is, to quicken, to convert, and bring to eternal life, all those who are elected by God the Father, and sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ.

They know that the Bible is the unerring word of God; that every syllable of it is true; and that a time shall come, when they themselves shall be arraigned at the Messiah's bar, and receive sentence for all the evil they have done, and for the evil which they have prevailed on men to do. They believe this, and tremble: φρίσσουσι, they are all in horror, commotion, and confusion. The term is borrowed from that violent, convulsive fermentation, which agitates the ocean, when it is wrought and lashed into all the turbulence and rage of total tempest.

Thus do these once dignified, but now degraded spirits, believe with all the certainty of demonstration, and tremble with all the horrible magnificence

of angelic fury and despair. They wait, with anxious dread, the enunciation of that sentence, which they know they must receive, from the lips of that incarnate God, whose crucifixion was brought about through their instigation. They asked him, in the days of his flesh, Art thou come to torment us, before the time (*a*)? And they still tremble, at the sure expectation of what they are to suffer, when they have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and the destined season of their torment is come.

What was observed, a few minutes ago, concerning the orthodoxy of devils, holds, I doubt not, equally true, of every human soul now in hell. When the departed spirits, of unregenerate men, do (figuratively speaking) open their eyes in torments; they, at the same time, open their eyes on the truths of God. There is not an Arian, a Socinian, a Sabellian, a Pelagian, or an Arminian, weltering in that lake of fire. As there are no heretics in heaven, so there are none in hell. It is only on earth, that men have the dreadful prerogative of out-sinning the very devils themselves.

Do not, however, mistake me, as though I meant to pass sentence of condemnation on any of my fellow-creatures. Whether the souls of such men as Arius, Socinus, and Arminius, who certainly trampled the gospel system under their feet, and were the artful and indefatigable instruments of disseminating the most pernicious errors; I say, whether the departed souls, of such heresiarchs and heretics as these, are saved or lost (which is among the secret things that belong to God); I will venture to declare, that Arius is not an Arian now. Sabellius is not now a Sabellian. The two Socinus' are not now Socinians. Pelagius is no longer a Pelagian, nor Manes a Manichean. Arminius is not

(*a*) Matth. viii. 29.

an Arminian, nor does Roëllus any longer dispute the eternal generation of the Son of God.

III. Let us consider, in what respects does the faith of devils differ from the evangelical faith of the saints, or from that faith which is of the (*a*) operation of God?

Much, every way: but, chiefly, in these.——

(1.) The faith of the devils is only a mere assent of the understanding, unaccompanied by any cordial consent of the will and affections to the truth: a faith, without regard to Christ, or any concern for the glory of God. They discern the traces of infinite wisdom, shining in the gospel plan; but they feel nothing of Christ's suitableness and loveliness. They speculatively see, but it is only to hate and blaspheme (and, if it were possible to counteract) the covenant-designs of the Trinity respecting the salvation of sinners.

Sorry I am, to observe, that we have some professors among ourselves, who are for shutting out all feelings of grace for Christian experience. I dare do no such thing. On the contrary, I am persuaded, that, if a cold, dry, assent to the written word be that faith which is connected with salvation; all the devils in hell, are and must be, children of God. But I cannot bring myself to have so good an opinion of satan and his legions. Nor, consequently, can I suppose that faith to be saving, which has nothing to do with spiritual feelings.

If once the feeling or inward perception of God's Spirit, as a (*b*) convincer of sin, and of righteousness, and of sanctification, were to be excluded from faith, there would presently be an end of all vital religion, and the power of godliness would take its flight, from that day forward. What is conviction of sin? it is no conviction to me, unless I feel my-

(*a*) Col. ii. 12. (*b*) John xvi. 8.

self convinced of my sinfulness and inability. What is conviction of Christ's righteousness? no conviction at all to me, unless I feel the necessity and value of that righteousness. What are the comforts of the holy Spirit? no comforts at all to me, except I feel them. Unfelt consolation is a contradiction in terms.

Hence our (*a*) church teaches us to pray, that, by the light of the same holy Spirit, who taught and illumined the disciples in the day of Pentecost, we too may have a right judgment in all things pertaining to God; and be enabled, evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort. But how can we rejoice in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, unless we feel and perceive his visitations? where is the enthusiasm of believing, that the blessed Spirit of God can make my soul feel, no less vividly, than the impressions of outward objects can make my soul perceive, through the organs of sensation? Putting scripture quite out of the question, I am bold to assert, that no churchman can reprobate religious feelings, without reprobating the church at the same time. For, in the 17th article upon election, or predestination unto life, the church roundly affirms, that the godly consideration of our election and predestination in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and to such as feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ. May we feel these workings, more and more, mortifying the deeds of the flesh, and drawing up our minds to high and heavenly things!

(2.) The faith of the devils is a faith without repentance. Though they saw something of the glory of God before they fell; yet, they do not repent of having fallen. My meaning is, they do not repent of having offended God; though the fear of

(*a*) Collect for Whitsunday.

punishment, resulting from self-love, may make them wish they had not sinned.

(3.) Theirs is a faith without love. Their language to the Almighty, is, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Whereas the cry of those who are endued with the faith of God's elect (*a*) is, Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God (*b*).

(4.) The diabolic faith is an Antinomian faith: a faith without holiness, a faith without good works. Whereas the faith of God's people is a faith inseparably connected with holiness, and infallibly productive of practical obedience. Whoever has St. Paul's faith, will and must have St. James' works.

(5.) The faith of devils, is a faith without desire. But that faith, which the Holy Ghost works in the hearts of his people, causes them earnestly to desire the favour, the presence, and the image of God in Christ. Nothing will satisfy a renewed soul, but communion with God, and conformity to him.

(6.) The faith of devils is a faith without reliance. Though they know the mercy of God to be immense, and though they see the merits of Jesus Christ to be all-sufficient; yet they have not one grain of reliance, nor wish they to rely, either upon the one or upon the other. Whereas they who (*c*) believe through grace, are enabled, in some degree, to trust the goodness, the covenant, and the promise of God; to trust the blood, and obedience, and mediation of Christ; to trust the grace, the power, and faithfulness of the Holy Ghost. They trust a little, and wish they could trust more. They build a little, and wish they could build higher and deeper, on the merits of Christ. They not only give their assent to the history of his obedience and sufferings;

(*a*) Titus i. 1. (*b*) Psalm xlii. 1. (*c*) Acts xviii. 27.

but rely upon them, and take shelter under them, as the sole procuring cause of pardon and salvation.

(7.) While the devils believe against their wills, and wish they were not forced to believe so much; the saints believe with their hearts unto justification, and are ever crying, Lord, increase our faith!

(8.) The faith of the infernal spirits does not look to the influences of the Holy Ghost. Whereas that faith, which the Holy Ghost inspires, as it comes from him, so it leads to him; and causes the soul to see, and to feel, and to rejoice, that all its strength, all its holiness, and all its happiness, are treasured up in the faithful hands of that holy, blessed, and adorable comforter.

To conclude. What learn we from the whole subject?

1. That those objections, which are commonly brought against the doctrines of grace, and against the good old church of England doctrine of predestination in particular; as if those doctrines carried an implication of arbitrariness and cruelty, and injustice in God; all fall to the ground, when we consider how vast a body of apostate spirits, much our superiors in natural excellency, and of an incomparably higher order than ourselves, were permitted to fall still lower than we, and are all absolutely passed by, or reprobated, without the election of so much as one of them to eternal blessedness. Thus God spared not the angels that sinned. No sooner did they transgress, than their punishment commenced; and satan, with his rebellious hosts, fell like lightning, from heaven (*a*). Now, if God could pass by millions and millions of angels, sparing not one of the whole number; who dares take divine sovereignty by the throat, and say, concerning its dealings with men, "What doest thou?" Has not

(*a*) Luke x. 18.

the potter power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour (*a*)? certainly he has. I hope, and believe, that thousands of those, who at present are not enlightened into the Bible and church of England doctrine of predestination; nay, who look upon it as if it was a Jezebel, fit only to be thrown out of window and trampled under foot; I hope the time will come, when even these shall experience the blessings with which God's electing love is fraught.

2. Bless the Trinity for distinguishing grace, astonishing it is, that he, who is God by nature, as being the everlasting Son of the Father, should, by consent of the two other divine persons, vouchsafe to take our nature upon him, when he passed by the non-elect angels, and left their nature alone. Well might those of the elect, unfallen angels, who announced the Messiah's birth, sing, Glory to God in the highest, and on the earth peace, good-will towards men: lost, guilty, feeble, hell-deserving men, to the exclusion of revolted seraphs! O sinner, sinner, who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, which thou didst not receive (*b*) from the sovereign, discriminating bounty of free-grace? Men are taken, and angels left! Nor does the Father of spirits incur the least shadow of injustice, by doing what he wills with his own; or by withholding, from any of his creatures, whether angelic or human, that grace, holiness, and happiness, which he owes to none. Are you or I unjust, in not giving to a person, what we do not owe him? Surely, not. And is God unjust who taketh vengeance? God forbid (*c*). O ye potsherds of the earth, who presume to cavil at the divine decrees, strive no longer against your maker, nor madly run on the thick bosses of his buckler! Remember, that you

(*a*) Rom. ix 21. (*b*) 1 Cor. iv. 7. (*c*) Rom. iii. 5, 6.

are no more qualified to arraign the glorious mystery of predestination, and to comprehend the whole of God's designs, than the purblind mole, peeping from the top of its little cavern, can survey, judge, and pronounce of, the universe at large. Fall down, therefore, at the footstool of the Omnipotent; and acknowledge, without limitation or reserve (what thou wilt surely and clearly discern in a future state), that God is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works. Be content to know no more of his motives and purposes, than himself has condescended to reveal.

" ———With trembling pinions soar:
Wait the great teacher, death: and God adore,
Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell;
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel."

3. If the faith of the devils is a faith without works; it follows, that such faith is unprofitable and dead, being fruitless and alone. For, as the body without the soul is dead; so faith without works is dead also. Where there is life, there will always be some degree of motion. And the believer who is truly such, cannot help showing that he believes, by living unto God, and by doing the works which he enjoins.

On the contrary, as a body literally dead, is totally motionless and incapable of transacting any worldly business; and its being in such a state of absolute inactivity, convinces us that its death is real, though it may still retain the shape and form of a man: so we may pronounce that person to be spiritually and religiously dead, who is motionless and unactive in the ways and works of God; notwithstanding such person may profess to be alive, and among some may even have a name to live. Faith without holiness, is no more gospel-faith, than an image of wood or stone deserves to be termed a man.

4. I need not apprise you, that you are called upon, by the voice of providence, to perform a good work this afternoon. The barren faith of devils, I am persuaded, will not satisfy you and me. We are for proving, by the good works we do, that grace is a lively, benevolent, operative principle.

Since the first institution of that parochial school, for which your bounty is now solicited, no fewer than five hundred and twenty-seven young persons have been admitted. Of those, one hundred and sixty have been apprenticed; fourteen fitted for the sea service; and upwards of three hundred have gone to domestic services, or been otherwise decently provided for. On the present establishment, there are now sixty children, of both sexes, who are maintained and taught, chiefly by means of those voluntary contributions, which are raised by good people, from time to time. Such of you as are alive unto God through Jesus Christ, need no arguments from the pulpit, to stir up your pure minds, even by way of remembrance. You do not, you will not, you cannot forget, that Christ has made the poor his own receivers general. I should, therefore, be guilty of offering an insult to all your fine feelings as men and Christians, should I press this matter farther, by detaining you with petitions and remonstrances. They, who possess a better faith, than that of which the text speaks, will, as lovers and imitators of Christ, rejoice, while, and as often as they have opportunity, to do good unto all men; and especially, unto them, who are of the household of faith.

You know not, but many of these young people, whom you are now going to assist (nay all of them, for any thing we can tell to the contrary), may have their names in the Lamb's book of life; may be useful members of society, through the support afforded them; and, in the world

to come, through the free grace of God, reign in life everlasting.

That they, and your their benefactors, may, to all eternity, sing and rejoice together, ascribing the whole of your salvation to the covenant mercy of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is my heart's desire, and my prayer to the triune God.

# SERMON X.

*Moral and Political Moderation Recommended.*

IN A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

AT ST. MILDRED'S, IN THE POULTRY, LONDON;

FRIDAY, December 13th, 1776.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL FAST.

# SERMON X.

PHILIP. iv. 5.

*Let your moderation be known unto all men.*

IT was a favourite and frequent remark of king Henry VII. that, when Christ came into the world, peace was sung; and, when he went out of it, peace was bequeathed. From the justness of which observation, may be inferred the manifest impropriety of a Christian minister's taking too deep and too acrimonious a part, in matters of merely civil concern.

Few men, indeed, have been more prone to dabble in politics, than some divines. And, it must be added, that in general, few men have acquitted themselves more lamely upon that subject, than those reverend daubers with untempered mortar. For one dean Tucker, who draws a sensible pen on the occasion, a hundred ignorant and mercenary scribblers emerge from their concealments, to darken counsel by words without knowledge.

The truth is, that those of the clergy, who mostly content themselves with paddling in the shallows of a superficial morality, step much beyond the line, both of their ability, and of their proper department, when they attempt to fathom the deep water of politics. For it is well known, that (in past ages at least) politics and morality have had but very slender connection with each other.

As to those of us who deem it our duty to preach the gospel, and to know nothing, among our people,

but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; we, of all persons in the world, should religiously abstain from whatever may conduce to cherish the seeds, and fan the fire of civil discord. Shocking it is, when they, who profess to experience and to preach the love of Christ, can so far prostitute the dignity and design of their sacred calling, as to offer fulsome incense at the shrine of aggrandized authority, or seek to exasperate differing parties against each other: instead of labouring to preserve unity of spirit, to strengthen the bond of peace, and to promote righteousness of life.

Such bad men in black, pay very little attention to that solemn vow which they took at the time of their investiture with the holy order of priesthood: when they pledged themselves to God and man, that they would "lay aside the study of the world, and of the flesh; and maintain and set forwards, as much as in them lieth, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people."

Our direct business is with the polity of an invisible and better country; even of a kingdom, which is not of this world. On one hand, we are to sound the trumpet, not of secular, but of spiritual, alarm; and, on the other, to proclaim unto them that mourn, and to them that believe, in Zion,

> "The joyful news of sin forgiv'n,
> Of hell subdu'd, and peace with heav'n."

Hence, it is my stedfast opinion, that pulpits were built to answer far nobler and more important purposes, than those of political declamation: and that an occasion must be very singular indeed, to warrant the substitution of discussions, so exceedingly remote from the letter and spirit of our heavenly commission. To those, therefore, who, as ministers of Christ, entangle themselves with the affairs of this

life, may that question be fairly accommodated; What dost thou here, Elijah?

There may arise, however, a coincidence of circumstances, so uncommon in themselves, as to admit of some short deviation from this general rule. Among these, I deem myself authorized to number that occasion, on which I have the honour of addressing you at present. We are assembled, for a purpose intimately connected with matters of national consideration: namely, to humble ourselves at the footstool of uncreated majesty; to deplore our own sins, and the sins of our people; and to supplicate the blessing of heaven on our king and country, the two prime objects of our earthly love.

Things standing thus, I find myself constrained, for once, briefly to start from my usual sphere. With a view to make my political moderation known to as many as condescend to hear me this day; and in order to rectify a few mistakes, which have been industriously and unjustly circulated; I request leave to premise some necessary particulars, declarative of my civil creed. For notwithstanding my religious and political honesty have, on more worldly occasions than one, apparently stood in my way; yet, through the good hand of God upon me, it is my invariable rule, to be strictly and inviolably transparent, even though it were to my own hindrance. We live at a time, when virtue of every kind is (for the most part) literally and solely its own reward. And an exceeding great reward is most certainly and inseparably connected with it. For who can describe the sweetness of that moral joy, which results from the testimony of conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world? with this simplicity, I observe,

1. That as I am, in the literal sense of the word, an Englishman; so I wish to be such, in the best

sense of it. Next to the gospel of Christ, I love and revere the constitution of my country. Consequently,

2. I am not a republican. On the contrary, I am a royalist, on principle. I have a most cordial and profound veneration, both for the office and for the person of the king; and hold myself obliged, if necessity required, to lay down my life in their just defence. Every pulse I have, sincerely and strongly beats for the present moderate episcopacy in the church; and for constitutional monarchy in the state.

Here, if I might be allowed a few moments digression, I would observe, that the notion of a pure republic is a mere idea, and no more. A commonwealth, truly and strictly so called, never yet subsisted, and never can subsist, except in the brains of a few speculative men, and in such writings as those of Plato, and sir Thomas More. The many were always statedly governed by the few: and always must be, while men are men; i. e. while providence distributes wisdom, wealth, and power, with unequal hand. A whole nation can no more be civil governors, than a whole church can be clergymen, or all clergymen bishops. I once asked the most respectable republican in this kingdom, whether a single instance can be produced, of a genuine republic, in the whole compass of ancient or modern history? I knew the answer must be in the negative; and so it was. There were, I confess, a few short periods, when the Athenian administration approached the nearest, perhaps, of any other, to an entire democracy: but, even then, it fell extremely short of the name. In our own country, when the House of Commons, after the execution of Charles I. assumed the sovereign power; was England, even during the short continuance of that self-created authority, a real republic? Nay, verily.

The three nations were three kingdoms still. They were governed by a multitude of kings, instead of one. Though without the name and the splendors, the long parliament (until Cromwell tripped up their heels) possessed and exercised all the powers of the most absolute royalty: and he that has the substance, need care but little for the shadow. Look at those nominal republics, which are now subsisting in several parts of Europe. Ask an inhabitant of Holland, of Genoa, of Venice, Geneva, or of the Switz cantons, whether the government there is completely popular? No such thing. They are not Republics, but Oligarchies. And Oligarchy is usually a species of the most grievous and insufferable tyranny.

3. In my opinion, every true Englishman is a constitutionalist: or, one who considers that happy mixture of the regal, the aristocratic, and the popular rights, established in this kingdom, to be one of the best and noblest efforts of human wisdom and justice, that ever did honour to the human understanding and to the human heart. Yet, let it be observed, that the persons who compose that most august threefold body, are not (as some have inaccurately affirmed) the constitution itself, but the natural and sworn guardians of it.

4. Though the constitution does not consist of the three estates, but the three estates derive their very being and importance from the constitution; still, the health and safety of the constitution depend on the preservation of that just balance and mutual counterpoise of power, which this wise distribution of authority was calculated to effectuate and maintain. If, in some remote age, the regal influence should absorb either the aristocratic, or the representative branch of the legislature, or both; ——on the other hand, should the higher or the lower house of parliament be, in some future period, sufficiently powerful and wicked (as the commons

in the last century were) to annihilate the just prerogatives of the crown, or the just privileges of the other parliamentary estate;————the constitutional balance will be broken: the several weights, by being thrown into one scale, will preponderate too much one way; and the sacred ark, of generous and equal liberty, will kick the beam. In the former case, posterity would be subject to the will of an individual tyrant: in the latter, to the still more terrible yoke of many.

5. I believe, that the spirit and privileges of the English constitution are analogous to the vital fluids in an animal body; which ought, by a liberal and impartial circulation, to warm and invigorate, not only the head and heart, but the meanest and remotest limb. Yea, every single hair is entitled, in its measure, to partake of the common supply.

A motley empire, made up of slaves and freemen, could not, from the very nature of so heterogeneous a conbination, continue long in that condition. Like the mongrel image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, it would soon fall, and be broken. Despotism has ever proved an insatiable gulf. Throw ever so much into it, it would still yawn for more. Were liberty to perish, irretrievably, from any part of the English world, the whole would soon be deluged, by the black sea of arbitrary power.

Moreover, tua res agitur, paries quum proximus ardet: "When your next neighbour's house is on fire, your own is in danger."—Some years ago, a gentleman, in Nottinghamshire, who had injured one of his feet, by paring a nail to the quick, laughed, on being told, that there was danger of a mortification. "Be it so," said he: "the foot is a long way from the heart." But, as distant as it was, the ascending mortification put a period to his life, not many weeks afterward. It holds as true, in the body civil, as in the body natural, that, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.

6. The English constitution is a system of qualified liberty. What is liberty? 1. Not an inflammatory turbulance of conduct; nor an unlimited freedom, or indecency of speech; nor a blind, red-hot attachment to party. Party, as one well defines it, is "The madness of many, for the gain of a few." Whereas true liberty consists in the legal safety, and good order of each, for the advantage of the whole. 2. Liberty is not licentiousness, or a power of committing evil with impunity; but the privilege of doing all the good we can; and of enjoying without molestation, and without fear, as much personal happiness as is consistent with the written law of God, the unwritten law of conscience, and the welfare of society at large.

Now, I would no more reprobate the true, modest, constitutional liberty, merely because some mistaken zealots may occasionally abuse it to licentiousness; than I would reject the scripture doctrine of grace, because a few men of corrupt minds, may possibly pervert it to Antinomianism.

If you wish to know clearly, what is comprised in the idea of English liberty, two or three hours reading will, at any time, thoroughly inform you. Peruse Magna Charta, publicly signed by king John; and afterwards confirmed, with still greater circumstances of solemnity, by Henry III.; though execrably violated by both. To this, add a perusal of the Petition of Right; very solemnly, but not very sincerely ratified and recognized by Charles I.—Then run over the Bill of Rights, which received either the hearty, or the dissembled concurrence of William III. And, lastly, make yourself acquainted with the coronation oath, taken by our succeeding monarchs. Whatever reaches fully to this fourfold standard, is constitutional freedom. All below this united mark, is not liberty; and all beyond it, is in legal construction, licentiousness.

Can any thing be more reasonable, and more easy, than for an Englishman to devote about three hours, out of a whole life time, to the knowledge of the constitution of his country? How astonishingly and how deplorably general, is our political ignorance, as a nation; though most of us affect to value ourselves on the excellency of our civil fabric! Like the Jews of old, too many Britons profess to worship they know not what: and too many others set but a slight esteem on a constitution, which they would almost worship, if they knew its worth. How inexcusable is English ignorance, when the short labour, and trivial expence, of so few hours' attention, would dissipate the mental cloud, and turn the darkness into day!

7. Intimately associated with civil, is religious liberty.

This consists, (1.) in that natural and indefeasible right, which every reasonable man has from God (and which no human authority can lawfully take away or abridge), of thinking for himself, of determining for himself, and of decently declaring his ideas, concerning all and every thing that relates to sacred matters. (2.) In worshipping God, both privately and publicly, according to the dictates of his own conscience; and that as safely, and as fearlessly, as St. Paul preached in his hired house at Rome, viz. ακωλυτως, without impediment, and no man forbidding him.

Every species of positive penalty, for differing modes of faith and worship, is at once antichristian and impolitic, irrational and unjust. While any religious denomination of men deport themselves as dutiful subjects to the state, and as harmless members of the community; they are entitled to civil protection, and to social esteem; whether they be Protestants, Papists, Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans. In this respect, among many others,

the British legislature, for near a century past, have eminently made their moderation known to all men. And Judge Blackstone, in a treatise which does equal honour to his country and to himself, has lately observed, that, "undoubtedly, all persecution and oppression of weak consciences, on the score of religious persuasions, are highly unjustifiable upon every principle of natural reason, civil liberty, or sound religion. But" (as he justly adds) "care must be taken, not to carry this indulgence into such extremes, as may endanger the national church.—There is always a difference to be made, between toleration and establishment.

"Certainly, our ancestors were mistaken in their plans of compulsion and intolerance. The sin of schism, as such, is by no means the object of temporal coercion and punishment. If, through weakness of intellect, through misdirected piety, through perverseness and acerbity of temper, men quarrel with the ecclesiastical establishment; the civil magistrate has nothing to do with it, unless their tenets and practice are such as threaten ruin or disturbance to the state. He is bound indeed, to protect the established church; and, if this can be better effected, by admitting none but its genuine members, to offices of trust and emolument, he is certainly at liberty so to do: the disposal of offices being matter of favour and discretion. But, this point being once secured, all persecution for diversity of opinions, however ridiculous or absurd they may be, is contrary to every principle of sound policy and civil freedom. The names and subordination of the clergy, the posture of devotion, the materials and colour of the minister's garment, the joining in a known or an unknown form of prayer, and other matters of the same kind, must be left to the option of every man's private judgment (*a*)."

(*a*) Commentaries, b. iv. ch. 4.

If we consider this branch of Christian moderation, merely in a civil view, nothing will be found more politically wise. The remark of a late (*a*) philosopher must ever hold good: that, "The true secret, for the discreet management of sectarists, is, to tolerate them." By which means, they are rendered less considerable; and, of course, less formidable. The more the children of Israel were oppressed in Egypt, the more they multiplied and grew.

Let us now take a survey of moderation, not as a public, but as a private virtue: or, rather as a Christian grace, inspired by the holy Spirit into the hearts of those who are born of God; and shining in the tempers, words, and works, of his elect, regenerated children.

St. Paul addressed not only the text, but this whole epistle, to the saints in Christ Jesus, at Philippi; and whom he declares to have been partakers of the same grace with himself. To these, whose names were in the book of life, and whose evident justification by Christ's righteousness entitled them to rejoice in the Lord always, he delivers that amiable precept, Let your moderation [το επιεικες υμων, your lenity, candour, tenderness, equity, and condescending meekness] be known unto all men.

The lovely constellation of graces, comprised in this expressive term, are what the apostle means, by our participating the mind that was in Christ: even that wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. It includes those effects of the blessed Spirit's influence, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and crucifixion to the flesh with its affections and lusts.

(*a*) Mr. David Hume.

Would you see the import of this significant word, exemplified to the life? Consult the following character, or moral portrait, of the Messiah; whom, as man and mediator, God the Father thus prophetically described: (*a*) Behold my servant, whom I sustain; my elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment [or make known my gospel and purposes of grace] to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. [i. e. He shall be all mildness, affability, and patience. No boisterous wrath, nor tumultuous noise, shall discolour any part of his behaviour. Though reviled, he will not revile again; nor threaten when he suffers. He will avoid every appearance of ostentation; and be as humble, as he is good. No fierce opprobrious language shall issue from his lips. Not the smallest rising of malevolence shall violate his purity of heart. Invincible calmness shall dignify his conduct; and candour dwell upon his tongue]. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. May we derive from his fulness; and like him, thus make our moderation known unto all men! That (to use the words of a good man, long since with God), "As paper receives from the press, letter for letter; as wax receives from the seal, mark for mark; and as a mirror reflects face for face; so we may receive from Christ, grace for grace; and have, in ourselves, a measure of every virtue that shone so bright in him!"

By viewing the features of some persons, you may know from what family they sprang; and, by observing the moral walk of religious professors, you may discern to whom they belong. As many as are

(*a*) Isaiah xlii.

led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. All who have God for their Father, and Christ for their Saviour, have sooner or later, the Holy Ghost for their sanctifier; and their sanctification by him is the effect and evidence of their adoption. By nature, the children of God themselves bear the image of the earthly Adam: but in the very moment of their conversion by insuperable grace, they begin to bear the image of the heavenly. The seal of divine influence is set upon their hearts; and their lives, from thenceforward, correspond to the transforming efficacy of that sacred impression. Being melted down by penitence, and conviction of sin, they are cast afresh, and (*a*) delivered into the gospel mould, where they are shaped and fashioned into vessels of honour, fit for the master's use. Like the cyon they are severed from the sinful stock, on which they grew; and, being inserted into Christ, the true vine, they bring forth fruit to God.

As when a river is turned into a new channel, the stream forsakes its ancient bed, and pursues a course unknown until then; so the soul of man, when its native captivity to sin and death, is turned as the rivers in the south, flows back to God, from whom it ran before; nor ceases to flow, until it has gained the ocean of infinite good.

This is the inseparable effect of union and communion with him. The glorious liberty of the children of God, is a liberty from the darkness of unbelief, and from the bondage of moral corruption, into the light of faith, the fire of love, and the law of righteousness. That question in the prophet, Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? admits of a favourable solution. The

(*a*) St. Paul expresses this idea very finely, in Rom. vi. 17. But God be thanked, that [though] ye were the slaves of sin, yet [in consequence of your regeneration from above] ye have from the heart, obeyed that mould of doctrine into which ye were delivered.

converting Spirit of God does that for us, which we could never do for ourselves. He makes the Ethiopian, in a moral sense, fair as the driven snow, and renders the spotted leopard spotless, in comparison of what he was. The vassals of iniquity become vessels of glory; and the soul, that once cleaved to the dust of sensuality, and lay dead in trespasses and sins, is quickened from above, and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. When the citadel of the human heart is taken by grace, the enemy's colours are displaced; satan's usurped authority is superseded; the standard of the cross is erected on the walls; and the spiritual rebel takes the vow of willing allegiance to Christ, his rightful sovereign. The strong holds of sin, on one hand, and of self-righteousness, on the other, are battered down; and the soul, from that blessed moment, made free indeed, cries out, Other lords have had dominion over me; but the darkness is past, and the true light now shines: the snare is broken, and I am delivered.

From this experience of the divine power in our own hearts, we cannot but adopt the celestial anthem, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men! Our moderation becomes known to all; and some of the practical effects, produced by, and connected with that spirit of holy moderation, are these that follow:

Where lust, that fiery serpent, was wont to crawl, divine love kindles her hallowed flame, and raises the affections, as on eagles' wings, to heaven.

Where unbelief, blind and sullen as the mole, lay wrapt in malicious gloom, loving darkness rather than light, and seeking to undermine what she had not eyes to see; faith diffuses the brightness of celestial day, and leads the willing soul to him who bought her with his blood.

Where insensibility, thoughtless as the bird that hastens to the snare, and gay as a victim crowned

for the slaughter, sported on the precipice of destruction, and danced on the verge of death; serious conviction fixes her keen, but salutary weapon; and filial fear keeps the avenues of the converted person's heart, and the actions of his life, in powerful, but sweet restraint.

Where envy pined; where malice hissed; where slander sharpened her tongue; and pride, that bloated snake, lifted her swelling crest: universal charity throws wide her arms; humility stoops to the tenderest offices of beneficence; and dove-like meekness smiles with benignity in her heart, and the law of candour upon her lips.

Where intemperance mixed the intoxicating bowl, and lawless riot pushed the superfluous glass; seeking to drown every thought of eternity, and to sink the poor remains of human dignity in the poisonous draught: there religious moderation marks out the limits; mindful of that more than golden rule, Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Where profaneness, assuming the mask of wit, spawned the irreligious jest, and solicited the hellish laugh; prostituting, perhaps, even the language of scripture to the purposes of licentious mirth, and playing on the very words of the Holy Ghost; trifling with sacred subjects, at which angels tremble, and lightly mentioning that adorable name, at which angels bow: there, from the moment of conversion, grace introduces a total change. The renewed sinner abhors himself, as in dust and ashes, for all that he has done; and can never sufficiently adore, admire, and revere, that infinite goodness, which, instead of turning him into hell, has turned him to God, and made him a living monument, not of deserved vengeance, but of unmerited mercy. His heart, which until then, was a sink of impurity and profanation, is transformed into a house of

prayer; and his mouth, once the seat of blasphemy, is consecrated into an altar of praise.

Where avarice sat brooding, tenacious as death, and insatiate as the grave; unfeeling as marble, and deaf to the cries of distress, as the adder that stops her ear: discreet liberality unlocks the heart, and well directed beneficence extends her hand to bestow. The language of the soul is similar to that of Zaccheus: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and, if I have taken any thing from any man, by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. The true believer, like his adorable Saviour, goes about doing good, and seeking whom he may relieve.

Where discontent, like a wild bull in a net, raged and struggled, turning the rod of affliction into a serpent, and charging providence with folly; reclining patience kisses the hand that smites, and, knowing that infinite wisdom and goodness have mingled the draught, not only receives, but even relishes the cup: while celestial hope casts her anchor on the inestimable promise of him who says, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; and who has immutably declared, that all things, without exception, work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose. Thus does the follower of Christ, in the communicated strength of the Holy One, take up his cross; content to bear it as long, and to carry it as far as God's unerring will shall please:

"Nor thinks it chance, nor murmurs at the load;
But knows, what man calls fortune, is from God."

Where sacrilegious impiety once robbed Jehovah of his own day, and profaned the Sabbath, either by rioting and excess, or by travelling, or by the

transaction of worldly business, or by making it an opportunity of recreation and idle amusement; thus rendering the best of days subservient to the worst purposes, either of atrocious guilt, or of criminal insignificance; either basely selling, or unprofitably squandering, those precious, those irretrievable hours, which should be appropriated to the glory of God, and to the spiritual improvement of the soul;——There, religious regard to divine appointment, and love to the gracious appointer, constrain the Christian to keep the Lord's Day holy to the Lord, and to cultivate an habitual, increasing fitness for the enjoyment of that Sabbatism, that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people of God.

In a word, where impenitency, armed with tenfold brass, stiffened her neck, and withdrew her shoulder from the yoke of obedience;——the once obdurate sinner, being made willing in the day of God's power, cries out with vanquished Paul, Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Tears of contrition flow, like water from the smitten rock; repentance strikes her conscious breast; and devotion darts her aspiring eyes to heaven.

May those of us, who have hitherto been unconcerned about the great work of conversion, beg of God to show them the things belonging to their peace, ere death makes them wise indeed; wise, perhaps, too late!

And may such of us, as are awakened by grace, to the experimental knowledge, love, and imitation of Christ, be led, farther and deeper, into acquaintance with God, and communion with his blessed Spirit: gaining, day by day, brighter evidences of our election to eternal life, and more substantial marks of our interest in the covenant of grace. Pray for the full assurance of faith, for the feeling of God's favour to you in Christ Jesus, and for the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins.

There are, indeed, seasons of darkness and distress, wherein God's dearest people may be tempted to fear, that their mark is not the mark of his children; and to say with them in the Psalmist, We see not our tokens. But let not the doubting believer think himself an alien, because he doubts: nor let him imagine, that, because he sees not his tokens, he therefore has no tokens to see. A broken and a contrite heart is an infallible token for good. For justification, fly to the righteousness of Jesus. If you cannot wrap yourself in it, yet throw yourself upon it, and he will not cast you out. For sanctification, commit yourself in the diligent use of means, to the power and faithfulness of the eternal Spirit, who has inviolably promised and covenanted, to write his law upon the hearts of his people. He will not send you empty away, nor permit you to seek his face in vain.

To seek his face with fasting, and supplication, and mourning, is the duty, and, I trust, will be the grand business of us all this day. And reason enough we have to prostrate ourselves before the God of armies and King of kings: for, even as individuals, and much more as a nation, our iniquities are increased, and our trespasses are grown up unto the heavens.

> "What land so favoured of the skies?
> And yet, what land so vile?"

Sin is the source of all the temporal evils, which we are met to deprecate. Mr. Soame Jenyns has justly reminded us, that, "If Christian nations were nations of Christians, all war would be impossible, and unknown among them." Be it then our prayer, on this solemn, this interesting occasion, that, as the far greater part of the inhabitants of our island are nominal Christians, and have been baptized with water into the outward profession of the gospel; God would please to make us Christians

in deed and in truth, by baptizing us with the Holy Ghost, and with the mystic fire of his sanctifying love. We might then hope, soon to see the day, when war shall be made to cease; when our swords shall be beat into plough-shares, and our spears bent into pruning hooks. Phosphore, redde diem; May our loved and honoured sovereign quickly behold his empire resembling a city that is at unity with itself! until that most desirable period shall arrive, let our moderation as Christians, and our loyalty as subjects, be known unto all men, by every word of our lips, and by every action of our lives: ever mindful of this grand, scriptural maxim, that we cannot truly be said to fear God, unless we also love the brotherhood, and honour the king.

I shall only detain you a moment or two longer, by observing, that you have now an opportunity of adding another good work to those in which you have already been engaged. When Cornelius fasted and prayed, he crowned those duties with showing mercy to the poor: and an angel was sent to him from heaven, acquainting him, that his prayers and his alms-deeds were ascended, as a memorial before God. The Ethelburga Society, who are at the expence of supporting a Sunday evening lecture, and of maintaining a charity school for the education, board, clothing, and apprenticing of no fewer than fifty-two children, of both sexes, request your benevolent contribution, to assist them in the support of this noble and eminently useful institution. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, rightly to improve the present season of national humiliation, by duly considering these awful words of God, with which I shall conclude:

Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast, ye find pleasure, and exact all the things wherewith ye grieve others. Behold, ye fast

for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast, as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.—Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord?—Is not this the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily.—Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am: if thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity. And, if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shalt thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

# REFLECTIONS

## ON THE CONVERSION OF MATTHEW,

Recorded in Luke v. 27, 28.

"*After these things, he*" [*i. e. Jesus*] "*went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. And he left all, rose up, and followed him.*"

DIVINE grace is the same thing in all ages; and when conferred in an equal degree, has the same effect in all persons. The reason of this is evident: namely, because the spiritual and moral depravity, that flows from original sin, being as great now, as it was the day Adam fell; the very same efficacy of grace is still requisite to subdue it, that was requisite from the beginning. The primary disease continuing, the primary remedy is as absolutely necessary now, as it was at first.

Besides, the blessed Spirit of God, who is the moral physician of souls, and the author of all that is heavenly and spiritual in the human heart, is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever: and so are his ordinary operations. Sin and grace are things unalterable in their nature: the revolution of ages makes no difference. Man is as much a fallen creature at present, as he was 4 or 5000 years ago; nor can less suffice to his renewal now, than was necessary to his renewal then.

This exertion of supernatural grace upon the soul in regeneration, is what divines mean by effectual calling. All mankind without exception, God's elect as well as the rest, are by nature, dead

in sin, and alienated from the love of Christ and heavenly things: nor is the human will, though free enough to sin, free to spiritual good, until the arm of the Lord, or almighty power from on high, is revealed in the soul, and regenerates it after the image of God. In the article of first conversion, man is nothing, and grace does all.

What has been hitherto observed, is a natural introduction to that concise, but comprehensive piece of sacred history, now under consideration. "After these things," i. e. after the Son of God had been preaching to the pharisees; and, among other miracles, had wrought a supernatural cure on the person of a bed-rid paralytic; "after these things, he went forth," by the sea-side, as we learn from St. Mark; "and saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom:" επι το τελωνιον, at the custom-house, or tax-office, erected for the payment and receiving of the toll, imposed by the Roman government on all that past and repast the sea, or lake of Galilee. In this place, and to receive this toll, sat Levi, or Matthew: the same who was honoured with a subsequent call to the apostleship; and who wrote the gospel, which at this day, bears his name.

Methinks I see the busy officer, with his book of entry before him, receiving and noting down the payments of the thronging passengers: when, lo, in the midst of the hurrying employ, the Son of God comes by. Matthew, perhaps, at first, looks up; and, mistaking the Lord of life for a common passenger, holds out his hand, expecting to receive the usual tax. But the blessed Jesus had a design in coming, which Matthew little thought. He came, to make the publican a saint and an apostle. Our Lord's going that way, was casual, and accidental, to outward appearance: but the true reason of his going, was to call and convert a sinner, whose name was in the book of life. Matthew was one of the

sheep of Christ, given him by the Father, and marked out for glory; and who was therefore to be called by grace, from the darkness of unbelief, and from the servitude of sin, into the light of faith and the liberty of holiness. And now the blessed moment was come. The time of love before appointed, the season in which he was to be savingly turned to God was arrived; and the efficacious grace of the holy Spirit made its way into his heart, when Christ accosted him with that unexpected, but resistless word, "Follow me."

When Christ thus addresses himself to the soul of man, divine grace at the same time lays hold of the heart, and captivates the affections into a sweet and willing compliance. It is most absurd in theory, and evidently false in fact, to suppose that when God speaks internally, he may speak in vain. So far is this from being true, that no word of his shall fall to the ground nor return again empty; but assuredly accomplish the end for which it was sent. No one who entertains a becoming idea of the great God, will venture to deny the freeness, the efficacy, and the independency of his operation; and that, when he will work, in vain do the potsherds of the earth set themselves in array against him.

But though the event is thus infallibly secured; and, when the influence of grace is savingly exerted, conversion, as the effect, must necessarily and surely follow (since it is simply impossible, that the purpose and the agency of an all-wise, and all-powerful Being, should be defeated and miscarry); yet this infers no sort of violence on the human will; since all God's dealings with his rational creatures, in a way of grace, are wisely and wonderfully suited to the faculties with which he has thought proper to endue them. In regeneration, the will of man is not forced, but renewed; it is not compelled, but amended and set right: in consequence of which,

it spontaneously directs its future motions to God, heaven, and things divine.

When our Lord said to Matthew, "Follow me;" though an invisible power accompanied the word to the heart, as the plumage wings an arrow to the mark; yet there was no compulsion on Matthew: he was not forcibly compelled, but, by grace, willingly and effectually inclined to follow the Lord that called him. He was not dragged, but drawn; and, being drawn, he ran.

From this view of the case, I cannot for my own part, but be of opinion, that the laboured attempts of some learned men, to reconcile the efficacy of God's grace with the liberty of the human will, are to the full, as needless as the methods they have frequently taken to do it, are unscriptural and dangerous. For, to make a show of reconciling what were never at variance, is needless: and to represent the divine will as depending on that of man, is fundamentally subversive of those high and great apprehensions of the Deity, which even the religion of nature dictates. We know that every reasonable creature is endued with a will, or faculty of disliking, on one hand; and of desiring, on the other. By virtue of this essential power, the will chooses that which is most agreeable to it; and delights in what it chooses.

But then this choice is determined to good or evil, according to the moral and spiritual state in which a man is. In a state of unregeneracy, his will and desire are carried toward that which is evil: since, as is the fountain, such is the stream; and, the man himself being morally corrupt, his faculties and his actions must be so too. In a state of grace, the bias and inclination of the will are to that which is spiritually good: the man himself being formed anew, and sanctified by the holy Spirit, his faculties, and the prevailing tenor of his actions,

must, of course, bear the impress of heaven; since, as is the tree, so is the fruit.

Hence it appears, that, in the work of converting sinners to himself, God is so far from impelling them as machines, or dragging them blindfold and against their wills, into happiness (though I do not see where would be the injury of even that); but this is so far from being the case, that the eyes of our understanding are then, and not till then, opened, to discern where our happiness lies, and in what our real interest consists: even in the knowledge, love, and resemblance, of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent: and this no sooner discovered to the soul, than the will, from that moment, chooses and aspires after the divine favour, the divine image, the divine presence, and the divine glory.

Here, you see, is not the least encroachment on human freedom. The will continues free, or unforced, at the very time that grace is all in all. Here is sovereign efficacy, without violence; and invincible energy, without compulsion. There is no force (but that of love); and there needs no other. The soul that has once had but a distant glimpse of the ravishing beauty and goodness of God, the infinite excellency of holiness, the exceeding greatness of the Redeemer's kindness, the fulness of his merit, and the immense riches of the salvation procured by him; the soul that has once seen and tasted these, needs no compulsive force, in order to love him, who is the fountain of good, and to aspire after that good, of which he is the fountain. The transcendent power of the sacred Spirit, by which his influence is made invincibly effectual to conversion, is no more inconsistent with liberty of will (truly understood), than the shining of the sun is inconsistent with the liberty of seeing.

Was there but this single instance of converting grace on record in scripture, this (I mean the in-

stantaneous conversion of Matthew, mentioned in the passage before us) would be sufficient to put the point out of all doubt. He was a person who sustained the character, and discharged the office, of a publican, or tax-gatherer for the Romans; an employ, above all others, odious to the Jewish nation, and, at the same time, infamous to a proverb. We may suppose, that it was a principle of covetousness and attachment to the world, which induced Matthew, who, as both his names declare, was an Israelite by birth, to engage in a way of life, which could not fail of rendering him hateful to his countrymen; who considered every publican, and more especially if he was a native Jew, as a tool to foreign tyranny, and a betrayer of his country. Notwithstanding the odium and detestation he was sure to incur, Matthew, previous to his conversion, accepted of the office; and, in all probability, was as avaricious and oppressive in the execution of it, as the rest of his hireling brethren. To see such a man, and in the very midst of his actual employ, wrought upon at once, by a word speaking; so wrought upon, as instantly, to leave all, rise up, and follow that blessed, but despised person, who had not where to lay his head;—All this evidently shows, that a conversion, so speedy and so total, and of such a person too, could be effected by no less power, than that which is omnipotent; and may vie with the greatest miracles which the Son of God performed.

It is true, indeed, there was something extraordinary in the call of Matthew. He was called, not only to be a follower of Christ, but (ultimately) to be an apostle likewise: and it was this that justified his forsaking all secular employment, that he might be more at liberty to attend his divine Master, and then to diffuse his gospel. But, I apprehend, that, with regard to the conversion of Matthew as a Christian, the grace and power by which it was

brought about, were neither more nor less than must be exerted by the good Spirit of God, in order to the conversion of any person whatever.

Besides: it is more than probable, that Matthew's call to the apostleship was subsequent to that call, of which the text speaks. For ought appears to the contrary, this history simply relates to his conversion as a man, not to his mission as a public minister: for (except in the single instance of Judas) Christ made men believers before he sent them forth as preachers. It should seem that when the Son of God said, "Follow me," a call to faith and sanctification was chiefly meant: which graces are equally necessary to the salvation of one as well as another. Hence our Lord declares, concerning all his people, without exception, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:" and St. Paul exhorts us to be "followers," or imitators, "of God, as dear children;" for it is certain that the Saviour of sinners says, in effect, to every sinner he saves, "Follow me," in holiness, in love, in every good word and work: and that grace, which stands connected with everlasting life, never fails of inducing those who partake of it, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world;" to be ornaments to the gospel they profess, and to walk in the blameless footsteps of him who hath redeemed them unto God by his blood, and by whose power and grace they are called to glory and virtue. We are not indeed required, like Matthew, to renounce our temporal vocations, and bid adieu to that lawful state of life, and honest labour, in which providence hath placed us: for we may rise up, and follow Christ, without doing that. Nay, it is our indispensible duty, to be industrious and diligent in our civil employments; and he that worketh not, should not eat; the drones should be driven from the hive. Religion is so far from being a plea for

idleness, that idleness is absolutely incompatible with true religion. "Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he was called," says the apostle: i. e. let every man continue in the same secular calling, and carry on the same lawful business after conversion, that he did before. The reason why St. Matthew was, in the literal sense, made to forsake all, and throw up his employ as a custom-house officer, was, as I observed, but now, that, by being at perfect liberty to attend on the personal ministry of Christ, he might be thoroughly qualified, both to preach the gospel afterwards, and to write that evangelical history of what he had seen and heard. But this affects not us. The case of the apostles, as such, was peculiar to themselves. We can have no such motives to forsake all; and he must be a madman who now thinks he has. There are other ways of forsaking all. We are to forsake all, not in a secular, but in a spiritual sense. Forsake iniquity, forsake the love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; forsake all dependence on our own righteousness; forsake all sinful connections; all unscriptural doctrines, and unscriptural practices; nay, in point of affection, forsake even all things, and give up our hearts to God. This is the forsaking to which we are called. Thus rise up, and follow Christ. Pray for grace to make you happy in the love of God, and holy in all manner of conversation and godliness. Beg of the blessed Spirit, to raise you up from the death of unbelief and sin, to the life of faith and righteousness, and to make you follow him in the regeneration. So shall we immediately on our dismission from the body, follow the Son of God into the glories of his kingdom; and lift up our heads with joy, when flesh and heart fail.

Nor shall death finally detain our mortal part. If, by grace, we have these evidences of our belonging to Christ; these marks of our interests in his merits,

and of our renewal after his image; he will say, to our sleeping dust, in the morning of the resurrection, "Awake, and follow me," follow me, first, into the blessedness of the millenniary state, and from thence to heaven. Then shall he call, and we shall answer; he shall seek us, and each shall say, "Here I am." We shall hear the voice, that shakes the earth and wakes the dead. We shall forsake the grave; rise up from the tomb, at our Lord's command; leave all our imperfections behind us; and follow him: follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, and be for ever with the Lord.

In the mean while, let us examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith; whether we have reason to trust, that the power of converting grace hath begun to work effectually upon our hearts. In a word, whether we have ever experienced, in a spiritual sense, any thing similar to what the text relates. Though we are not called to be apostles, yet all who shall appear with Christ in glory, are called to be saints. And what is a saint? one who is hallowed, or set apart, by divine grace, for the use and service of God: one who is made a partaker of that faith which relies, singly relies, on the blood and righteousness of Christ, for justification with God: and who is a subject of that holiness, without which none shall see the Lord: one who leaves all things, so far as they consist not with faith and good conscience; who counts all that earth can give, but dross and dung, when compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and with the privilege of being found in him; who rises up into the moral likeness of God; and follows the Lord that bought him, in sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. Such persons have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: they have a manifest interest in the favour of the former, and in the merits of the latter. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost,

they are built up into temples of God; their grace, their peace, their joy are multiplied.

After surveying this picture of a saint, next look into your own heart, and see if you can discover any resemblance of it in yourself; any corresponding features, any traces of the divine image there. For as face answers face in a glass, so the experience of one saint is in general, nearly similar to that of another. Some indeed may have a stronger likeness of their heavenly Father, than others: but every true believer does, in a greater or less degree, resemble God. Bring yourself therefore now to the test of God's word. Try your state and experience by the touchstone of the text. Has Christ ever said to you, by the still small voice of his good Spirit, "Follow me?" if he has, you do follow him: for his will is effectual, and his command is ever accompanied with power. But is the unbeliever, the impenitent, the unholy, a follower of Christ? Surely, no. He only is a follower of his, who resolves the whole praise of his salvation into the grace of God, and the atonement of the cross, who is grieved at heart, for all that he has done against Jesus; and whose desire is practically to walk worthy of him, unto all well pleasing.

Hereby you may know whose image and superscription you bear. These are the outlines of that divine resemblance, in a restoration to which consist the dignity, and the happiness of man. Let this then be your prayer: "Try me, O God, and search the ground of my heart: prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any wickedness in me, any root of bitterness yet undiscovered; and lead me in the way everlasting. Show me the true state of my soul. Bring me out from every false refuge. Strip off every deceitful covering, every covering that is not of thy Spirit, Forbid, that the anchor of my hope should be cast, or the house of my dependence built, on any but Christ, the rock of

ages. Forbid, that I should rest short of that repentance which is thy gift, and is connected with life eternal: and forbid, O forbid, that I should sit down without aspiring to that conformity unto thee in righteousness and true holiness; abstracted from which, repentance is false, and faith is dead."

Such are the breathings of the soul that is born of God. If this, O man, be not the language of thy inmost heart, thou art far from Christ, thou art yet in thy sins; thou hast not forsaken all; thou hast never been made to rise up and follow the Lamb of God. But, if this is thy wish and thy prayer, I am bold to say, that it is the echo of effectual grace; and that God hath begun that good work in thee, which shall be carried on to the day of Christ, and be found with honour and glory at his appearance. That Spirit of regeneration, who hath drawn the outlines of his sacred image upon thy soul, will go on to improve the imperfect draught, until he hath touched it with the perfect likeness of his blessed self. What he hath begun in this life, shall be completed in the article of death. The dawn of grace, the morning of consummate sanctification, when thou art taken up to shine at God's right hand.

Until then, look incessantly unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith. Even while the penitent sense of thy past offences, and of thy remaining imperfections, humbles thy soul, and overwhelms thy conscience with a holy blush; let glowing gratitude, aspiring love, and unlimited confidence in the blood of sprinkling, exalt thy heart, and wing thy affections to the throne. And beware of ascribing any part of thy conversion to yourself; for the work was God's, and so should be the glory. Do not rob God, by putting free-will for free grace; but remember, that you never have rose up and followed Christ, if he had not, by the effectual call of his Spirit, said to your heart, "Follow me." For it is

no thanks to you but to him. If you love him, it is because he first loved you. Man's will was never yet beforehand with God. "Herein is love," says the apostle; "not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent," &c. Under such impressions, David's devout aspiration will be the counterpart of yours; "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein is my desire. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I desire in comparison of thee!" Prelusive this, to that still more triumphant song, which the spirits of the just are now singing before the throne of God and the Lamb; "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever."

# LIFE A JOURNEY.

GENESIS xii. 5.

"*They went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*"

GOD having decreed to put Abram's posterity into possession of the country, since called Palestine, commanded that patriarch to leave Chaldea, his native land, and to set out, with his family, for the place whither providence should lead him.

Abram, who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, was not disobedient to the heavenly vision: but, as the inspired penman informs us, he took Sarai (his wife), and Lot (his brother's son), and all the substance they had gathered, and the souls, or persons, which they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came. The same unchangeable God, who had promised to bring them into that land, actually brought them into the land he had promised: and they not only set out for Canaan, but arrived safely there, according to the purpose and promise of him who had bid them go.

Now, since Abram is distinguished in scripture, as father of the faithful; or as one, whose stedfast, unsuspecting confidence in the promises was singularly eminent; and whose faith, for that reason, stands on record as a pattern to the people of Christ in all succeeding generations; since he was likewise a type of the church collective, which consists of, and takes in, all true believers, from the beginning to the end of time; and as the land of Canaan, to which Abram travelled, is represented in scripture

as a figure of heaven, that better country, to which all God's elect people are bound, and to which they shall all be led: for these reasons, we shall, I apprehend, put no force on the words of that text, which stands as a motto to this essay, nor strain them beyond their due meaning, if (beside their literal signification as a history) we consider them in a spiritual light, as importing the safety of those, who, in consequence of being called forth from a state of nature by converting grace, are enabled to set their faces Sion-ward, and to enter on a journey to the kingdom of God. The chief business therefore of the present attempt, shall be to show, that, to every real Christian, the present life is only a journey to a better; and that all they who do in earnest set out for the heavenly Canaan, the Jerusalem which is above, shall certainly get safe to their journey's end, and not one of them perish by the way.

When a merchant sends out his fleet on a trading voyage, he is not sure of the event. His ships may arrive at the desired haven, and return with the wished increase; or they may founder on their passage, and both cargo and crews be lost.—Or, when a person takes a far journey, he has no assurance of safety. He cannot pre-discern what is before him; nor whether he shall come back to his house in peace or no. Such is the uncertainty of earthly transactions with regard to our foreknowledge of them. We cannot tell what a day, what a moment may bring forth. The issue of things lies hid in the womb of futurity, till providence and time make manifest the determinations of God, by bringing those determinations to pass.

Not so clouded are the better things which relate to a better life. The feeblest seeker of salvation by the blood of the Lamb, and the meanest hungerer after the kingdom and righteousness of Jesus, may be assured beforehand, that the kingdom shall be his. The inseparable blessings of grace and glory

are styled, the sure mercies of David (Acts xiii. 34.) τα οσια Δαϐιδ τα πιϛα, the sacred [i. e. the inviolably certain, and] the faithful things of David, i. e. of Christ: or more conformably to the original passage in Isaiah, the sure benefits of David: meaning, the infallible certainty of those benefits (such as pardon, justification, sanctification, final preservation, and eternal happiness), which are secured to the church, by virtue of that unalterable covenant subsisting between the Father, the Spirit, and Christ the antitype of David, in behalf of all who shall be made to believe through grace.

This everlasting covenant of peace and salvation, entered into with God the Son, by the other two divine persons, St. Paul had in view, when he says, God, willing to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel [βουλης, of his decree], confirmed it with an oath, that by two unchangeable things [namely, his decree and oath], wherein it is impossible for God to falsify, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, Heb. vi. 17, 18.

Now, as Abram literally set forward from the land of his nativity; so, in a figurative sense, does every person who is effectually called by grace. By nature, we are insensible of our sinful state, and ignorant of our extreme danger; impenitent, and unbelieving; and (which argues the utmost blindness and depravation) self-righteous, though unholy. This is a compendious map of the natural man. He is a native of Mount Sinai; born under the covenant of works; fondly expecting to be justified by the deeds of the law; though he has broke the law, more or less, in every particular.

From this legal state of insensibility, impenitence, unbelief, self-righteousness, and bondage to sin, every child of God is delivered, by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost; through whose al-

mighty agency, we are caused to turn our backs on the blind road we were pursuing before, and to steer a different course. No longer insensible of our real condition, we feel that every step we took, was leading us farther and farther from God and happiness in heaven. Ignorant no longer of the danger, to which we were obnoxious, by reason of original and actual sin; we have recourse to Christ alone, as the way, the truth, and the life. No more impenitent, we bewail the depravity of our hearts, and the transgressions of our hands; we love the rectitude we hated, and hate the sins we loved. Retrieved from absolute unbelief, we feel the necessity of Christ, and throw ourselves upon the grace of God in him, for deliverance from the wrath to come. No longer habitually self-righteous, we not only most willingly submit to, but most thankfully embrace, and most devotedly rest upon, and triumph in, the righteousness of Christ, as the sole procuring cause of our acceptance in the Father's sight. And, no longer quite unholy, we pant after inward conformity to the divine image, and outward conformity to the divine law: thoroughly sensible, that, without holiness no man can see the Lord; and that faith without works is dead.

Whosoever is brought thus far, is more than halfway to the kingdom of heaven. He has made through grace, a good progress on the road to Sion; and shall go on, from strength to strength, till he appear before the God of gods in glory.

When this happy change is effected, and the converted person begins to evidence his new birth, by forsaking his old companions in sin, and by leading a new life; different people will pass different censures upon his conduct. One will, without ceremony, dub him a new-fashioned Methodist. Another will set him down for an old-fashioned Puritan. A third will roundly pronounce him a madman, that has lost his senses by being righteous over-much.

A fourth, who has more politeness, and less ill-nature than the rest, will say to him, I wonder how a person of your good sense in other things, can be so precise. You will hurt your (*a*) nerves, and damp your spirits. There is no occasion for all this ado. Take a cheerful glass! Give the rein to your appetites! and make a merry life of it, though it be a short one.

Thus will multitudes endeavour, by various methods, to call the traveller back, and to divert him from his Christian course. But he still holds on his way: answering, as he passes, We shall see whose life will be merriest in the end.

Yet let not the follower of Christ cause the way of truth to be ill spoken of, or bring an evil report on the good land, by needless rigour, and by affected severity. Do not sullenly reject the gifts of providence, under a pretence of superior sanctity; but use them, without abusing them. If you have them not, be not anxious after them. If you have them, enjoy them in the fear, and to the glory of God. There is a sober, restrained sense, in which a true believer may say with the poet,

> "The blessings thy free bounty gives,
> Let me not cast away:
> For God is paid, when man receives:
> To enjoy, is to obey."

Receive, gratefully. Distribute, cheerfully. Enjoy, innocently. Give thanks, incessantly. When you set out for heaven, do not set up for a monk; nor look upon those things as criminal, which the

(*a*) The late Dr. E——n; bishop of St. David's, dissuaded a lady from hearing Mr. Whitefield preach, for fear it might hurt her nerves. But what was this, when weighed against the piety and religion of a great churchman now living? who, no longer ago than the very last month that ever was (viz. in the month of August, 1775) actually said to a lady of quality, "Do not tell me of St. Paul, Madam: it would have been happy for the Christian church, if St. Paul had never wrote a line of his epistles."

word of God does not declare to be so. Gnat-strainers are too often camel-swallowers: and the pharisaical mantle of superstitious austerity is very frequently, a cover for a cloven foot. Beware, then, of driving too furiously at first setting out. Take the cool of the day. Begin, as you can hold on. I knew a lady, who, to prove herself perfect, ripped off her flounces; and would not wear an ear-ring, a necklace, a ring, or an inch of lace. Ruffles were Babylonish. Powder was antichristian. A ribband was carnal. A snuff-box smelt of the bottomless pit. And yet, under all this parade of outside humility, the fair ascetic was ———. But I forbear entering into particulars. Suffice it to say, that she was a concealed Antinomian. And I have known too many similar instances.

Take heed, however, O believer in Christ, of verging to the opposite extreme. Beware of a supine, lukewarm, libertine spirit. Watch unto prayer, guard against negligence. Advance not to the uttermost bounds of your liberty. It is a just remark, which I have somewhere met with, that the best way to be secure from falling into a well, is not to venture too near the brink. Swim not with the stream, if the tide roll downward; neither follow a multitude to do evil. It is the duty of a Christian, not to be ashamed of being singularly good; especially in an age like this, when so many are not ashamed of being eminently bad. Better go with a few to heaven; than to go with much and polite company to hell. He that fears men, and seeks to please men at the expence of gospel-truths, or of good morals, is not an honest man, much less a servant of Christ. And though in matters of mere indifference, you are not absolutely bound to abridge your liberty as a Christian; nor is it meet that you should affect to be good, any more than to be wise, above that which is written; yet, if you find (as in some instances you pro-

bably will) that even things, in themselves indifferent, prove a snare, an entanglement, and a hinderance to you, in running the race that is set before you, pluck out these things, be they what they may, and cast them from you: though they be useful as a right hand, or as tender as a right eye. In a word, endeavour to hit the just medium; so as neither to make too much haste, nor too little speed; neither to loiter, nor to run yourself out of breath.

If the believer's journey should prove a long one, i. e. should he live to be far advanced in years, he must expect to meet with diversity of paths. The face of the country will not always be the same. Even with regard to temporal things, perhaps, he may experience a vicissitude of ups and downs. Sometimes the road will go rough; sometimes smooth. To-day it may be, he is high on the mount; to-morrow, low in the valley. Now, his way is carpeted with moss; anon, it is planted with the pricking briar and the grieving thorn. But, remember, O child of God, that both one and the other is thy Father's ground; that thou art still in the land of providence; and that the land of providence is also a land of grace, to them who are strangers and pilgrims upon earth.——So, likewise, in a spiritual sense: when faith is in lively exercise, we may be said to travel through a rich, level, open country; where all is easy, lightsome, and pleasant. Soon, perhaps, may faith sicken (sicken it may, but blessed be God, it cannot die), and hope may flag its wing: fear may set upon thee, as a strong man armed, and the overshadowings of doubt may for a while eclipse thy comforts. In that case, let the believer still go forward, as well as he can. The way will mend, and the prospect brighten, in God's good time. And, in the meanwhile, that precious promise will be fulfilled, Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as is thy day, so shall thy strength be, Deut. xxxiii. 25.

—If thou canst not go on, sit down; but let it be by the way side. Wait; but let it be at Jacob's well. Ply the ordinances of God, and the God of ordinances will come to thee and bless thee. When poor Hagar, overwhelmed with distress of mind, and quite exhausted with fatigue of body, threw herself on the ground, unable to walk a step farther, an angel was sent, to point her to a fountain which she knew not of, and to give her the oil of joy for mourning, and a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Godly sorrow ever was, and ever will be, the peculiar care and the tenderest object of Almighty love.

Travellers need not be told, that the weather is not always uniformly the same.—At times, the affections of a saint are warm, sublime, and strongly drawn up to God and divine things. Anon, his affections may gravitate, grow numbed and cold; and like an eagle that is pinioned, be scarce able to creep, where once they used to fly. Yet, be not cast down. You may, like Sampson, be shorn of your locks for a season; but they will grow again, and your strength shall return as heretofore. Remember, that comfortable frames, though extremely desirable, are not the foundation of your safety. Our best and ultimate happiness is grounded on an infinitely firmer basis, than any thing in us can supply. The immutability of God, the never-failing efficacy of Christ's mediatorial work, and the invariable fidelity of the Holy Ghost, are the triple rock, on which thy salvation stands. Whence that of the apostle: The foundation of the Lord [i. e. the decree, or covenant of the Lord] standeth sure; having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And again: Though we believe not [though we may occasionally reel and stagger and faint] yet he [faith's unchangeable author and immoveable supporter] abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself. Was he to deny his decree, he must deny himself;

for his decree is himself decreeing. But he cannot do this. He cannot forego his covenant; for his covenant is himself covenanting. He cannot reverse his promise; for his promise is himself promising. Consequently, every believer is safe, and can never be ultimately left or forsaken. As surely as effectual grace stirred thee up to undertake the heavenly journey; so surely, shall glory crown thee at the end of thy pilgrimage.

Contentedly therefore embrace thy lot: knowing, that the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord. Be the weather fair, or foul; let the calm prevail, or the storm rage; be thy mind cheerful, or benighted; be thy path dreary with gloom, or radiant with sun-shine; commit thyself, in patience and well-doing to God, as to a gracious creator and an all-wise disposer. A traveller is not the worse for being weather-beaten. It teaches him to endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Besides: he is at the worst of times, sure of invisible support; and every difficulty he encounters by the way, will be infinitely overbalanced, when he gets home to his Father's house. For the utmost sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

In point likewise of affluence and fortune, all the travellers to Canaan are not alike. Some of them are literally rich, and increased in goods. While others have but a small allotment of temporal wealth, barely enough to carry them to their journey's end. The former may be said, to be drawn in state to heaven; the latter, to trudge it on foot.

I say, some are drawn thither in state: for every coach does not take that road. But, so we at last get safe to the New Jerusalem, no matter whether we ride or walk. It will be all one by and by. As in death, so in heaven, the rich and the poor, who are partakers of saving grace, will meet together: and then where will be the difference between those

who came with a grand retinue; and those who travelled, pilgrim-like, with a scrip at their side, and a staff in their hand?

On earth, when two persons are literally going to the same place; and the one is either well mounted, or seated in an expeditious carriage, and the other goes on foot; the foot passenger must needs make the slower progress of the two. But, in spiritual things, this case is often reversed. The humble foot passenger frequently outstrips the rapid horseman, or the stately charioteer; and is seen not seldom, to make swifter advances in the knowledge of God and in the way to heaven: just as Elijah outran Ahab's chariot to the entrance of Jezreel. And thus that observation of the apostle is verified: Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom? Yes, he has: and some too who are opulent; for we read, that even Cæsar's household, the very court of Nero, was not wholly destitute of saints. But, since much wealth too often proves a snare, and an incumberance to the Christian racer; let him lighten the weight, by dispersing abroad and giving to the poor: whereby, he will both soften the pilgrimage of his fellow travellers, and speed his own way the faster.

A passenger to Zion, like most other passengers, must expect to meet with different kinds of company on the road; different, in some respects, though bound to the same place. I suppose that there are scarce ten persons in any civilized nation, whose religious and metaphysical ideas are, in every punctilio, exactly alike, any more than their faces. Examine the countenance of any man, and you will see some peculiar cast, some turn of features, which distinguishes that countenance from every other. Now, opinions are in some sense, the features of the mind: and there will always be a diversity of mental features, during the present dispensation of

things. The elect will never perfectly resemble (*a*) each other, till they perfectly resemble Christ in glory. Hence appears, not only the illiberality, but also the absurdity of being at daggers drawn with other people, on account of differences merely extrinsic and circumstantial.—Narrow as the way is, which leadeth unto life; it is yet broad enough to admit persons of divided judgment in things indifferent. There may be several paths in one and the same road: and shall I be so weak, or so malicious, as to suppose, that a professing brother is not in the way to everlasting happiness, only because he does not walk arm in arm with me, and tread in my particular track? I grant that there is but one road to heaven; namely, an interest in the atonement and righteousness of Christ: for no man cometh to the Father, but by him. I believe however, and feel myself unutterably happy in believing, that this only avenue to eternal rest admits of much greater latitude, than bigots of all denominations are aware of. Let therefore the travellers to the city of God bear in mind that amiable exhortation of Joseph to his brethren, See that ye fall not out by the way.

When persons undertake a journey to a distant, unknown country, it is not unusual to have recourse

(*a*) This puts me in mind of a candid and judicious remark, made by a valuable Christian brother, of a different denomination from myself, in a letter with which he favoured me, some years since. "I have seen a field here, and another there, stand thick with corn. A hedge or two has parted them. At the proper season, the reapers entered. Soon the earth was disburthened, and the grain was conveyed to its destined place; where, blended together in the barn or in the stack, it could not be known that a hedge once separated this corn from that. Thus it is with the church. Here, it grows as it were, in different fields; severed it may be, by various hedges. By and by, when the harvest is come, all God's wheat shall be gathered into the garner, without one single mark to distinguish that once they differed in the outward circumstantials of modes and forms."———To these truly evangelical and truly benevolent sentiments, I deem it my honour and happiness, to subscribe with hand and heart.

to a guide. During their passage to Canaan, good people may by mutual exhortation, reproof, and instruction in righteousness, be occasionally, guides to each other. But the two grand, stated guides of the Redeemer's church are, the Spirit and the word of God: to which may be added, in humblest subordination to these two, the ministers of God. Generally speaking, these three guides do best together. A minister without the written word, would bid fair to be a false guide, a mere will-of-the-whisp, a dancing meteor, who would only set you astray. And the word itself, without the spirit, is but as a dial without the sun, a dead letter, and a book that is sealed. Therefore, the way for us not to lose our way, is to receive nothing from man, but what bears the stamp of scripture; to beg of God, that he would shine upon the dial, that we may consult it profitably, and know whereabout we are, i. e. that he would make us understand the scriptures by the saving light of his blessed Spirit; and then, to look upon no influence, impulse, suggestion, or direction, as the certain voice of God in the soul, except it harmonise and coincide with that sacred scripture which himself inspired. —Thus wonderfully and wisely, are the means of salvation connected! The word of God directs us to the Spirit of God; the Spirit of God makes that word effectual; and the true ministers of God act in the most absolute subserviency to both.

Nor are the Christian travellers guided only, but guarded likewise. And a guard is requisite; for the highway of holiness is infested with robbers. Though the celestial road is inclosed from the common, and made a distinct way of itself; yet, it lies through an enemy's country, and the Canaanite is still in the land. Satan will study to annoy those whom he cannot devour. The world will try various arts, both of menace and allurement. And indwelling depravity, from whose remains we are never wholly de-

livered in the present life, will on all occasions be ready to revolt from the obedience of faith, and to bring us into subjection to the law of sin. The foes without, though vanquished, are not slain: and original corruption, that beast within, though wounded, is not dead; nor motionless, though chained.

Happy is it for God's regenerate people, that they do not go through the wilderness, defenceless and alone. If they did, they might well fear with David, I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul. But they are under the escort of a truly invincible armada. Providence is for them without; and grace within. Though they appear as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, they are no less than kings in disguise; kings and priests unto God. His own inviolable faithfulness is their portion; and his angels, principalities, and powers, think it an honour to guard them: for those exalted beings are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation. Hence, in that grand writ of protection, recorded in the 91st Psalm, we read; He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways: they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou hurt thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet. The gates of hell may assault, but they shall not prevail. They may endeavour to intercept the believer on his passage to Canaan; but God, who put it into his heart to go, will be his guardian even unto death.

There is no convenient travelling without proper accommodations, and a competent supply of provision. Deprived of these, the healthiest would become languid, and the most robust would faint by the way. For this reason, the God of all kindness has, figuratively speaking, furnished the road to his kingdom with houses of rest and refreshment, where his redeemed may occasionally turn in and renew

their strength. The good things of his providence may be considered as the temporal accommodations vouchsafed by his bounty, for the comfort and support of our mortal part: and the stated means of grace are the spiritual accommodations, designed to quicken, strengthen, and sustain the soul, unto life eternal. When outward ordinances are made effectual to this end, through the holy Spirit's influence, of which they are the ordinary channel; then is it, that God's travellers can pursue their way rejoicing; and sing as they go, The King of Sion has brought me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. In secret prayer, in public worship, in reading the scriptures, in sitting under the word preached, and in compassing the altar of the Lord; his saints catch some delightful glimpses of their heavenly Father's countenance, and lay up a stock of experiences and consolations for faith to feed upon afterwards, and in the strength of which they travel many days. Summer-experiences, viewed in retrospective, are what the soul can sometimes reflect on with comfort, during the cold and darkness of wintry desertions: just as the pot of manna, reserved in the ark, reminded Israel of the months and years that were past; and remained as a token for good, long after God had ceased to rain on his people the bread of heaven, and to feed them with angels' food.

Nor does his goodness only spread a table for us in the wilderness, by the bounties of his providence, and by the consolations of his presence. He even deigns perhaps at times to soften the toils of our warfare, and to sweeten the fatigues of our journey; by showing us as in perspective, the city to which we are hastening; and by giving us, in the full assurance of faith, a taste of Canaan's grapes, on our way to Canaan's land. Faith is the mount, and gospel promises and gospel ordinances are the pleasant windows, from whence (like Moses from the top of

Pisgah) we survey that good land which is afar off. The nearer we approach to heaven, the clearer, frequently are our views of it:

Divinely fair, and full in sight,
The shining turrets rise!

I mean, if and when the light of God's Spirit shines upon faith's eye, and illuminates the gospel windows. For the keenest human eye can discern no object, and the most transparent windows in the world can transmit no prospect, if light be totally excluded.

Sin, temptation, weakness of faith, or sense of guilt, may sometimes spread a mist between a child of God and his view of glory. But there are also intervals of assurance, seasons of holy rejoicing, when faith is high on the wing, when hope trims her lamp, and when seraphic love (like the ascending Tishbite's fiery chariot) wraps the elevated soul to heaven. The happy traveller emerges from the dark, deep, narrow lanes, where his feet were embarrassed with mire, and where the boughs met over his head, and all prospects of the adjoining country were shut out. He mounts the hill. The sky brightens, and the prospect widens. All is light, and cheerfulness, and joy. During these golden moments, this is the triumphant song: "God is my father. Christ is my righteousness. The Spirit is my sanctifier. The Messiah loved me, and gave himself for me. He died for my sins: he rose again for my justification; and, because he lives, I shall live also."

Under such comfortable anticipations of the glory that shall be revealed, when faith pierces within the veil, whither Jesus our forerunner is gone before; the believer cries out, "O how amiable is even this distant prospect of thy dwelling, thou Lord of hosts!" Or in the language of the spies of old, We have seen the land; and, behold, it is very good.

When shall we drop these mortal bodies? when shall we get through the desart? when shall we go up and take possession? when shall we receive the end of our faith, even the full salvation of our souls? How long, O Lord, holy and true! why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? Make haste, my beloved, to fetch me away; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart on the mountains of spices!

Fear not, thou that longest to be at home. A few steps more, and thou art there. Soon, O believer, it will be said to thee, as it was to her in the gospel, The master is come, and calleth for thee. When that word is pronounced, when you are got to the boundary of your race below, and stand on the verge of heaven and the confines of immortality; then there will be nothing but the short valley of death between you and the promised land: the labours of your pilgrimage will then be on the point of conclusion, and you will have nothing to do, but to entreat God, as Moses did, I pray thee let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon. Or, with David: O send out thy light and truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling-place!

Dread not the interjacent valley; it is but the shadow of death: and what is there in a shadow to be afraid of? Dark as it may seem, it will brighten as you enter; and, the farther you go, the brighter will it prove. When soul and body, like two bosom friends who have travelled long and far together, come to the parting place, where (like Abraham and Lot) they separate, and each goes a different way, one to the grave and the other to heaven; when death, your last enemy is subdued (for he is not destroyed entirely, until the morning of the resurrection dawn); when you have got to the extremity of the vale, and have actually breathed your last; you will find your equipage waiting for you on the other side, to take you from the

body, and to set you down at the throne of God. Angels of light, those chariots and horses of fire, attend on every expiring saint; and not only, as guides, show his disembodied spirit the way to heaven; but, likewise guard him, during the passage; and, it is probable, act as vehicles, to convey him thither; just as Lazarus was (*a*) carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.

Having thus traced the Christian in his spiritual journey, from nature to grace, and from grace to glory; let me for the present leave him there; and address myself to those, who, as well as myself, are still detained in the wilderness, and whose tour is not yet finished.

The readers of this address, and indeed the whole world at large, may be distributed into two kinds of people; of those who are travelling to Canaan, and of those who are going the direct contrary way. There are but two roads: the broad, which leadeth to destruction; and the narrow, which opens into life. Travellers all mankind are; and travellers at a very swift rate. The grand point is, Where art thou travelling to?

Are you desirous of knowing whither thy footsteps tend; and toward what country thy face is set? Consult the way-marks. Look at the directing posts. Have recourse to the scriptures of truth. But study them on your knees, i. e. in a spirit of prayer, and with the simplicity of a little child.

Suppose for instance, we consult John xvi. 8.? where Christ thus describes the office of the Holy Ghost, and the effects which his converting influence

(*a*) Ελενεγθηναι—απενεχθηναι αυτον υπο των αγγελων. i. e. He [viz. his soul] was carried away, or borne off by angels (Luke xvi. 22.) Thus, as in life, so at death, does every one of God's elect experience the utmost accomplishment of that promise; He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee: acting as thy invisible shields on earth; and at last, as thy chariots and retinue, which shall convey thee to heaven. Such honour have all the saints! Hallelujah.

has on the human mind. "When he is come," when the blessed Spirit visits and renews the chosen and redeemed world, "He shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" i. e. He shall (first) feelingly demonstrate to them, their absolute sinnership, and their total helplessness; working in them a deep sense and real hatred of self and sin; he shall (secondly) lead them to rest on Christ, and on his righteousness, alone, for justification; and he shall (thirdly) spiritualize their desires, refine their tempers, sanctify their lives, and make them ready to every good word and work.

Now, has God the Spirit done these things for you? Has he wrought, or begun to work, this threefold conviction in your soul? If he has not, nor so much as kindled a groaning desire of it in your breast, I dare not give you the right hand of fellowship. I dare not salute you, as one of my fellow-travellers to the kingdom of God. No. You are yet in Egypt. And you will quickly be in hell, except the Holy Ghost take you by the hand, and take you by the heart, and lead you in Christ to Zion.

But, if you have ground to hope, that this work of grace is experienced by you in some degree; if, on looking at your soul in the gospel-glass, you can discern the traces of faith, love, repentance, and sanctification there; you are in the number of them who have set forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan you shall come. Two things are particularly needful for you to observe: 1. That the world will endeavour to turn your feet out of the narrow way. If the wicked are so muzzled by providence, that they cannot bite; they will snarl, at least. If they cannot do you real injury they will probably pelt you with scandal, and sneer at you for being in their opinion, righteous overmuch. But let not this discourage you. Regard it no more than a traveller would mind a little dust

upon his shoes. Imitate the blind man in the gospel; who, the more he was exhorted by the multitudes to hold his peace, cried out, so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. 2. Beware of sin. Shun the remotest appearance of evil. Think it not enough, to be for the main, in the right way; but endeavour to walk steadily and erectly in that way. Though a truly converted person cannot fall, as to turn back finally, and perish everlastingly; yet, without due attention, and watching unto prayer, he may kill his peace and joy in believing, and forfeit that inward testimony of the holy Spirit, that felt fellowship with God, and that sweet tranquillity of conscience, without which, living scarce deserves the name of life. It is a sad thing when a saint is overturned on the road, by being off his guard. Though he cannot lose his soul, yet a fall may break the neck of his comforts, dislocate his frame, and make him go halting to his journey's end. "The devil," as one justly remarks, "is never better pleased, than when he can roll a child of God in the dirt." Beg the Lord, therefore, to hold up your goings in his paths, that your footsteps slip not. Be it the language of your heart and of your conduct, I have put off my immoral coat; how then shall I again put it on? I have washed my feet; and almighty grace forbid that I should any more defile them.

Yet, if you fall, be humbled; but do not despair. Pray afresh to God, who is able to raise you up, and to set you on your feet again. Look to the blood of the covenant; and say to the Lord, from the depth of your heart,

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!
Foul, I to the fountain fly:
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Make those words of the apostle, your motto: "Perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed." It has been justly observed, that "it is one thing to fall into the mire; another thing to lie in it." Away to the cross of Christ, and to the Spirit of God, for cleansing and for healing. Your covenant Father will then sprinkle you from an evil conscience, and make you recover the time and the ground you have lost. And, when thus graciously restored, look upon sin as the bitterest calamity that can befal you; and consider those who would entice you to it, or be your partners in it, as the very worst enemies you have.

Soon shall we arrive where not only sin, but every temptation to it, and every propensity toward it, will cease for ever. As a good man once said on his death-bed, "Hold out, faith and patience! yet a little while, and I shall need you no longer."—When faith and patience have done and suffered their appointed work, the disciples of Christ shall ascend from the wilderness to paradise. With joy and gladness shall they be brought, and shall enter into the king's palace; singing, as they mount, "Lift up your heads, ye celestial gates! and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the heirs of glory may enter in. We are they, some of whom came out of great tribulation; but all of whom have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Stirred up by his effectual grace, we went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and clothed with his righteousness, and preserved by his power, into the land of Canaan we are come." Even so. Amen.

A SHORT

# ESSAY ON ORIGINAL SIN.

*By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners.*

ROM. v. 19.

SELF-knowledge is a science to which most persons pretend; but, like the philosopher's stone, it is a secret which none are masters of, in its full extent. The mystic writers suppose, that before the fall, man's body was transparent, analogous to a system of animated chrystal. Be this as it may, we are sure that, was the mind now to inhabit a pellucid body, so pellucid as to make manifest all the thoughts and all the evil workings of the holiest heart on earth, the sight would shock and frighten and astonish even the most profligate sinner on this side hell. Every man would be an insupportable burden to himself, and a stalking horror to the rest of his species. For which reasons, among others,

Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings, but himself,
That hideous sight, a naked human heart.

The most enlightened believer in the world, knows not the utmost of his natural depravation, nor is able to fathom that inward abyss of iniquity, which is perpetually throwing up mire and dirt; and which, like a spring of poison at the bottom of a well, infects and discolours the whole mass. Let the light of scripture and of grace give us ever such humbling views of ourselves, and lead us ever so far into the chambers of imagery within, there still are more and greater abominations beyond; and, somewhat like the ages of eternity, the farther we advance, the more there is to come.

The heart of man, says God, by the prophet, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?—In me, said the apostle, that is, in my flesh, abstracted from supernatural grace, dwelleth no good thing.—And, says a greater than both, From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark vii). Is it possible, that any who calls himself a Christian, can, after considering the above declaration of Christ, dare to term the human mind, a sheet of white paper? No: it is, naturally, a sheet of paper blotted and blurred throughout. So blotted and defiled all over, that nothing but the inestimable blood of God, and the invincible Spirit of grace, can make it clean and white.

Neither the temptations of satan, by which we are exercised; nor the bad examples of others, which we are so prone to imitate; are the causes of this spiritual and moral leprosy. They are but the occasions of stirring up, and of calling forth, the latent corruptions within. If (as David speaks) our inward parts were not very wickedness, if we were not shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, if enmity to God and holiness was not moulded into our very frame and texture; temptation and bad example would bid fair to excite our abhorrence, instead of engaging our compliance, conciliating our imitation, and operating with such general success. The truth is, we all have an inherent bias to bad, which readily falls in with the instigations that present themselves from without. Similis similem sibi quærit. Inward and exterior evil catch at each other, by a sort of sympathy, resulting from a sameness of affection, nature, and relationship. It is the degenerate tinder in the heart, which takes fire from the sparks of temptation. Hold a match to snow,

and no inflammation will ensue. But apply the match to gunpowder, and the whole train is in a blaze.

How must such a heart appear, if exposed to the intuitive view of an observing angel! And, above all, how black must it appear, in the eyes of immense and uncreated purity, of the God who is glorious in holiness, and, compared with whom, the very heavens are not clean! Judge of the infinite malignity of sin, by the price which was paid to redeem us from it, and by the power which is exerted in converting us from the dominion of it. For the former, no less than the incarnation and death of God's own Son, could avail. For the latter, no less agency, than that of God's own Spirit can suffice.

The hints already premised, give us (as far as they go) the true moral picture of a fallen soul: and such would all the descendants of Adam appear in their own eyes, and feel themselves to be, did they, by the light of the holy Spirit, see themselves in the pure, unflattering glass of God's most perfect law.

This likewise is the view in which the church of England represents the state of man by nature. "Man, of his own nature, is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God; without any spark of goodness in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds. As for the marks of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if he have any at all in him, they proceed only of the Holy Ghost, who is the only worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus (*a*)."

Strong as this painting is, it is no caricature. Not a single feature of our natural corruption is exaggerated, or over-charged. You that read, and I who

(*a*) Homily for Whitsunday, part i.

write; yea, every individual of mankind, that now lives, or shall hereafter be born; may, with the church of old, plead guilty to the whole indictment, saying, We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

I have read of an English painter, who, after only once meeting any stranger in the streets, could go home, and paint that person's picture to the life. Let us suppose, that one, whose likeness had been taken in this manner, should happen to see unexpectedly his own picture. It would startle him. The exact similitude of shape, air, features, and complexion, would convince him that the representation was designed for himself, though his own name be not affixed to it, and he is conscious that he never sat for the piece.——In the scriptures of truth, we have a striking delineation of human depravity through original sin. Though we have not sat to the inspired painters, the likeness suits us all. When the Spirit of God holds up the mirror, and shows us to ourselves, we see, we feel, we deplore, our apostacy from, and our inability to recover, the image of his rectitude. Experience proves the horrid likeness true: and we need no arguments to convince us, that, in and of ourselves, we are spiritually wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

But how came man into a state so different from that in which Adam was created? Few inquiries are so important: and no subject has given occasion to more various and extensive disquisition. Multitudes of conjectures have been advanced, and volumes upon volumes have been written, concerning the origin of human ill.

That moral evil, in almost every possible branch of it; and that natural evil, as the consequence of moral; do actually abound all over the world, are truths too evident to be denied. That the matter of fact is so, will not admit a moment's dispute.

But concerning the primary cause and inlet of these evils, men are not so unanimously agreed.

Some of the more considerable and judicious philosophers of heathen antiquity; particularly, the oriental ones (from whom the opinion was learned and adopted by Plato); supposed, that the spirits, which occupy and animate human bodies, were a sort of fallen angels; who, having been originally spirits of very superior rank, were, for misbehaviour in a nobler state of pre-existence, deposed from their thrones, degraded into human souls, and shut up in mortal bodies. Of course, those philosophers considered this earth as a place of banishment, and bodies as a kind of moving dungeon, where souls wander about, like prisoners at large, obnoxious to a vast variety of pains and inconveniences; by way of penance for past misdemeanors, and as a means of gradual purification, prelusive to their eventual restitution to the happiness from which they had fallen.

Conformably to this view of things, Plato chose to derive σωμα, the Greek word for body; from σημα, which signifies a tomb, or sepulchre; on supposition, that the body is that to a soul, which a grave is to the body; and that souls emerge from the body by death, as a bird flies from a broken cage, or as a captive escapes from a place of painful and dishonourable confinement.

Not a few of the eastern sages pursued the idea of the pre-existence of souls to such a length, as to suppose, that the immaterial principles, which undoubtedly actuate the bodies of animalcules, of insects, and of brutes, are no other than fallen spirits, reduced to a class of extreme degradation: that, in proportion to the crimes committed in their unembodied state, they were thrust into material vehicles, of greater or of less dignity: and, that passing through a successive series of transmigrations from a meaner body to a nobler, they rise by continual progression, from animalcules to insects, from insects

to birds or beasts, and from these to men; till at last they recover the full grandeur and felicity of their primitive condition. All these supposed changes and removals from a humbler body to a higher, were considered by the philosophers who adopted this hypothesis, as so many stages both of punishment and of purgation; by which, as by steps rising one above another, the imprisoned spirit grew more and more refined, its powers widened into greater expansion, and itself approached nearer to its original and its final perfection.

I must own, that this was a train of conjectures extremely ingenious, and not a little plausible, when viewed as formed by persons who had not the light of the Bible to see by. And I believe, that, for my own part, I should have fallen in with this system, as the least improbable, and the least embarrassed, of any other; had not the gracious providence of God assigned my birth and residence to a country, where the scriptures of inspiration kindly hold the lamp to benighted reason.

St. Paul, within the compass of two or three lines, comprises more, than all the numberless uninspired volumes which have been written on the subject. By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so [ὑτως, in this way, or by this chain of mediums] death (διηλθεν) went through, upon all men; inasmuch as all have sinned, Rom. v. 12.

It is evident, from hence, that, previously to the first offence of that one man, who was the father of the human race; he was sinless, and, of course, happy, and deathless.———Let us for a moment carry back our meditations to the garden of Eden, and endeavour to take a view of Adam, prior to his fall.

The sacred oracles acquaint us, that the first man was created spiritually and morally upright: nay, that he was made after the image of God; and was (in some respects, and with due allowance for the

necessary imperfection inseparable from a creature) the living transcript of him that formed him.

This phrase, the image of God, is to be understood chiefly in a spiritual, and entirely in a figurative sense. It does not refer to the beauty, and to the erect stature of the body; but to the holy and sublime qualifications of the soul. The grand outlines therefore, of that divine resemblance, in which Adam was constructed, were holiness, knowledge, dominion, happiness, and immortality.

But man, being thus made in honour, abode not as he was made. For reasons, best known to that unerring providence which ordains and directs every event, it was the divine pleasure to permit an apostate spirit (whose creation and fall were prior to the formation of man) to present the poisonous cup of temptation; whereof our first parents tasted, and in tasting, fell.

Whether any of the dismal effects which instantly ensued, were partly owing to some physical quality in the fruit itself; or whether all the effects which followed, were simply annexed to that act of disobedience, by the immediate will and power of God; were an enquiry, more curious, perhaps, than important.

So also is another question: which relates to the particular kind of fruit, borne by the forbidden tree. Whether it was a pomegranate, or a cluster of grapes; an apple, or a citron; scripture has not revealed, nor are we concerned to know.

This only we are sure of, from scripture, reason, observation, and our own experience; that mankind, from that day forward, universally lost the perfection of God's image, that θεια φυσις, and ὁμοιωσις τῳ Θεῳ, or divine nature, and likeness to God, as Plato calls it: and sunk into, what the same philosopher styles, το αθεον, a state ungodlike, and undivine. Our purity vanished. Our knowledge suffered an almost total eclipse. Our dominion was

abridged into very narrow bounds: for no sooner did man revolt from his obedience to God, than a vast part of the animal creation revolted from its obedience to man. Our happiness was exchanged for a complication of infirmities and miseries. And our immortality was cut short by one half: a moiety of us (i. e. the body) being sentenced to return for a time to the dust from whence it sprang. The immortality of the soul seems to be the only feature of the divine likeness, which the fall has left entire.

From hence, even from Adam's transgression, proceeds that ἀλαξία, or disorder and irregularity, both of being and events, diffused through the whole world. Hence it is, that the earth brings forth weeds, and poisonous vegetables. That the seasons are variable. That the air is fraught with diseases. And that the very food we eat, administers to our future dissolution, even at the time of its contributing to our present sustenance.

Hence also proceed the pains, and the eventual death of inferior animals. All sublunary nature partakes of that curse, which was inflicted for the sin of man. Whether these ranks of innocent beings, which are involved in the consequences of human guilt, shall, at the times of the restitution of all things (*a*), be restored to a life of happiness and immortality (which they seem to have enjoyed in paradise before the fall, and of which they became deprived by a transgression not their own); rests with the wisdom and goodness of that God, whose mercy is over all his works. It is my own private opinion (and as such only I advance it), that scripture seems, in more places than one, to warrant the supposition. Particularly, Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21. which I would thus render, and thus punctuate: the earnestly wishful expectancy of the creation, i. e. of the brute creation; that implicit thirst after hap-

(*a*) Acts iii. 21.

piness, wrought and kneaded into the very being of every creature endued with sensitive life; virtually waits with vehement desire for that appointed glorious manifestation of the sons of God, which is to take place in the millenniary state: for the creation, the lower animal creation, was subjected to (*a*) uneasiness, not willing it, or through any voluntary transgression, committed by themselves; but by reason, or on account of (*b*) him who subjected them to pain and death, in hope, and with a view, that this very creation shall likewise be emancipated from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. What a field of pleasing and exalted speculation does this open to the benevolent and philosophic mind!

But I return to what more immediately concerns ourselves.

When Adam fell, he fell not only as a private individual, but also as a public person; just as the second Adam, Jesus Christ the righteous, did afterward, in the fulness of time, obey and die, as the covenant surety and representative of all his elect people.

The first Adam acted in our names, and stood in our stead, and represented our persons in the covenant of works. And, since his posterity would have partaken of all the benefits, resulting from his continuance in the state of integrity; I see not the injustice, of their bearing a part in the calamities consequent on his apostacy. We cannot but observe, in the common and daily course of things, that

(*a*) So the word μαλαιόης, here used by the apostle, may fairly, and without any straining, be rendered.—Ponitur ματαιος, substantivè, "pro אין, molestia. Pro ח ץ, vastator, vastitas, vastatio. Μαλαιόης pro חון, Ærumna." Minterti Lexic. in voc.

(*b*) By him who subjected the brutal world to miseries, unprocured by any sin of their own, may be understood, Adam himself; or rather, the Most High God, whose will it was, that the welfare not only of mankind, but also of every thing that lives, should be suspended on Adam's obedience.

children very frequently inherit the diseases, the defects, the poverty, and the loses of their parents. And if this be not unjust in the dispensations of providence (for, if it were unjust, God would certainly order matters otherwise); why should it be deemed inequitable, that moral as well as natural evil, that the cause as well as the effects, should be transmitted by a sad, but uninterrupted succession from father to son.

Many of the truths revealed in scripture, require some intenseness of thought, some labour of investigation, to apprehend them clearly, and to understand them rightly. But the natural depravation of mankind is a fact, which we have proofs of, every hour, and which stares us in the face, let us look which way we will.

Indeed, we need not look around us, for demonstration that our whole species has lost the image of God. If the holy Spirit have at all enlightened us into a view of our real state, we need but look within ourselves, for abundant proof, that our nature must have been morally poisoned in its source; that our first parent sinned; and that we, with the rest of his sons, are sharers in his fall. So that, as good bishop Beveridge observes (in his commentary on the ninth of our church articles), "Though there be no such words as original sin, to be found in scripture; yet, we have all too sad experience, that there is such a thing as original sin to be found in our hearts."

Heathens themselves have felt, and acknowledged that they were depraved beings: and depraved, not by imitation only, but by nature; or (as the church of England well expresses it) by "birth-sin."—Hence that celebrated saying, so usual among the Greek philosophers, Συμφυτον ανθρωποις το ἁμαρτανειν, i. e. moral evil is implanted in men, from the first moment of their existence. Plato goes still farther, in his treatise "De Legibus:" and directly affirms, that

man, if not well and carefully cultivated, is Ζωον αγριωτατον οσσα φυει γη, the wildest and most savage of all animals. Aristotle asserts the same truth, and almost in the same words with Plato. The very poets asserted the doctrine of human corruption. So Propertius: Unicuique dedit vitium natura creato; i. e. "Nature has infused vice into every created being." And Horace observes, that youth is cereus in vitium flecti; or, "admits the impressions of evil, with all the ease and readiness of yielding wax."—And why? Let the same poet inform us. Nemo vitiis sine nascitur: "The seeds of vice are innate in every man."

Whence proceed errors in judgment, and immoralities in practice? Evil tempers, evil desires, and evil words? Why is the real gospel preached by so few ministers, and opposed by so many people? Wherefore is it, that the virtues have so generally took their flight? that

> ———Fugere pudor, verumque, fidesque;
> In quorum subiere locum fraudesque, dolique,
> Insidiæque, et vis, et amor sceleratus habendi?

Original sin answers all these questions in a moment. Adam's offence was the peccatum peccans (as I think St. Austin nervously calls it), the sin that still goes on sinning in all mankind: or, to use the just and emphatic words of Calvin (Institut. l. iv. c. 15.) Hæc perversitas nunquam in nobis cessat, sed novos assiduè fructus parit; non secus atque incensa fornax flammam et scintillas perpetuo efflat, aut scaturigo aquam sine fine egerit: "The corruption of our nature is always operative, and constantly teeming with unholy fruits: like a heated furnace which is perpetually blazing out; or like an inexhaustible spring of water, which is for ever bubbling up and sending forth its rills."

So terrible a calamity as the universal infection of our whole species, is and must have been the

consequence of some grand and primary transgression. Such a capital punishment would never have been inflicted on the human race, by the God of infinite justice, but for some adequate, preceding offence. It is undeniably certain, that we who are now living, are in actual possession of an evil nature; which nature we brought with us into the world; it is not of our own acquiring, but was

"Cast and mingled with our very frame;
Grew with our growth, and strengthened with our strength."

We were therefore in a state of severe moral punishment, as soon as we began to be. And yet, it was impossible for us to have sinned in our own persons, antecedently to our actual existence.

This reflection leads up our enquiry, to that doctrine which alone can solve the (otherwise, insuperable) difficulty now started, viz. to that doctrine which asserts the imputation of Adam's disobedience to all his offspring. And which is, I. founded on scripture evidence; and II. adopted by the church of England; and III. not contrary to human reason. I will just touch on these three particulars.

I. God's word expressly declares, that, By the disobedience of one man, many were constituted sinners, Rom. v. 19. They are in the divine estimation considered as guilty of Adam's own personal breach of the prohibitory command. Now, the judgment of God is always according to truth. He would not deem us guilty, unless we were so. And guilty of our first parent's offence we cannot be, but in a way of imputation.

By the offence of one [δι ενος παραπτωματος, by one transgression], judgment came upon all men, unto condemnation, Rom. v. 18. which could not be unless that one transgression was placed to our account.

By one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Rom. v. 12. Yea, death reigned, and still continues to reign, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression: v. 14. Infants are here designed by the apostle; who have not sinned actually and in their own persons, as Adam did, and yet are liable to temporal death. Wherefore then, do they die? Is not death the wages of sin? Most certainly. And seeing it is incontestibly clear, that not any individual among the numberless millions who have died in infancy, was capable of committing actual sin; it follows, that they sinned representatively and implicitly in Adam. Else they would not be entitled to that death which is the wages of sin, and to those diseases by which their death is occasioned, and to that pain which most of them experience in dying. A majority of the human race are supposed to die under the age of seven years. A phenomenon which we should never see under the administration of a just and gracious God, if the young persons so dying had not been virtually comprehended in the person of Adam when he fell, and if the guilt of his fall was not imputed to them. Nothing but the imputation of that, can ever be able to account for the death of infants; any more than for the vitiosity, the manifold sufferings, the imperfections, and the death of men.

II. This is the doctrine of the church of England. "We were cast into miserable captivity, by breaking of God's commandment in our first parent Adam." (Second homily on the misery of man).

"Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man." (Article IX.) The corruption or defilement, is ours by inherency: we ourselves are the seat of it. But original sin can be our fault only by imputation, and in no other possible way.

"Dearly beloved, ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to release [this child] of his sins." (Baptismal office.) In the estimation therefore of our church, every infant is not only chargeable with sin in the singular number; but with sins in the plural. To wit, with intrinsic defilement, as the subject of an unholy nature; and with the imputed guilt of the first man's apostasy from God.

III. There is nothing contrary in all this, to human reason, and to the usual practice of men.

There is not a single nobleman, or person of property, who does not act, or who has not acted, as the covenant-head of his posterity; supposing him to have any.

Even a lease of lives, signed by a legal freeholder; and sometimes the total alienation of an estate for ever; are binding on (perhaps the unborn) heirs and successors of the person, who grants the lease, or signs away the property.

A person of quality commits high treason. For this, he not only forfeits his own life; but also his blood (i. e. his family) is tainted in law, and all his titles and possessions are forfeited from his descendants. His children, and their children to the end of the chapter, lose their peerage and lose their lands, though the father only was (we will suppose) in fault.

Thus the honours and estates of all the heirs in England, are suspended on the single loyalty of each present possessor respectively!

Where then is the unreasonableness of the imputation of Adam's crime? Why might not the welfare, and the rectitude, of all his posterity, be suspended on the single thread of his integrity? And what becomes of the empty cavils that are let off against those portions of holy writ which assure us, that in Adam all die?

But wherein did Adam's primary sin consist? Of what nature was that offence, which

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe?"

The scholastic writers, whose distinctions are frequently much too subtile, and sometimes quite insignificant, seem to have hit the mark of this enquiry with singular skill and exactness.

They very properly distinguish original sin into what they call peccatum originans, and peccatum originatum.

By peccatum originans, they mean the ipsissimum, or the very act itself, of Adam's offence in tasting the forbidden fruit.

By peccatum originatum, they mean that act, considered as transmitted to us. Which transmission includes its imputation to us, in point of guilt; and that internal, hereditary pollution, which has vitiated every faculty of man from that moment to this. With regard to the latter, a very slight acquaintance with ourselves must convince us that we have it. And as for the former [viz. the article of imputation], it could not have taken place, if Adam had not sustained our persons, and stood or fallen as our legal representative.

Consider original sin as resident in us, and it is very justly defined by our church to be that corrupt bias, "whereby man is very far gone [quàm longissimè distet, is removed to the greatest distance possible] from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit." (Art. IX.) Upon which definition, the life of every man is, more or less, a practical comment.

But, Honos erit huic quoque pomo. Many, and of the utmost importance, are the consequences deducible from this great scripture doctrine. I shall briefly point out a few.

1. We learn from hence, that, which the ancient heathens in vain attempted to discover; viz. the door, by which natural evil (as sickness, afflictions, sorrow, pain, death) entered into the world: namely, the sin of Adam. Though the reasons why God permitted Adam to sin, are as deeply in the dark as ever; what we do know of God, entitles him surely to this small tribute at our hands, viz. that we repose our faith, with an absolute, an implicit, and an unlimited aquiescence, on his unerring wisdom and will; safely confident, that what such a being ordains and permits, is and must be right: however incapable we may find ourselves at present, to discern and comprehend the full propriety of his moral government.

2. Hence too, we learn the infinite freeness, and the unspeakable preciousness of his electing love. Why were any chosen, when all might justly have been passed by? Because he was resolved, for his own name's sake, to make known the riches of his glory, i. e. of his glorious grace, on the vessels of mercy, whom he therefore prepared unto glory.

3. Let this, O believer, humble you under the mighty hand of God; and convince you, with deeper impression than if ten thousand angels were to preach it from heaven, that election is not of works, but of him that calleth. Not your merit, but his unmerited mercy, mercy irrespective of either your good works or your bad ones, induced him to write your name in the Lamb's book of life.

4. So totally are we fallen by nature, that we cannot contribute any thing towards our recovery. Hence it was God's own arm which brought salvation. It is he that makes us his people, and the sheep of his pasture; not we ourselves. The church says truly, when she declares, that "We are by nature the children of God's wrath: but we are not able to make ourselves the children and inheritors of

God's glory. We are sheep that run astray, but we cannot of our own power come again to the sheepfold.—We have neither faith, charity, hope, patience, or any thing else that good is, but of God. These virtues be the fruits of the Holy Ghost, and not the fruits of man.——We cannot think a good thought of ourselves; much less can we say well, or do well of ourselves." (Homil. on the misery of man). We are, in short, what the scripture affirms us to be, naturally dead in trespasses and sins; and no dead man can make himself to differ from another. Conversion is a new birth, a resurrection, a new creation. What infant ever begat himself? What inanimate carcase ever quickened and raised itself? What creature ever created itself?

Boast not then of your free-will; for it is like what the prophet saith of Nineveh, empty, and void, and waste. They that feel not this, resemble delirious persons in a high fever; who imagine that nothing ails them, while in fact they are at the very gates of death. Nay, mankind in their native state are more than at the gates of death. The traveller in the parable, who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, is said to have been left half-dead; but the degenerated sons of Adam are, spiritually speaking, stark-dead to God. An unrenewed man has not one spiritual sense left; no hearing of the promises; no sight of his own misery, nor of God's holiness, nor of the perfect purity of the law, nor of Christ as an absolute Saviour, nor of the blessed Spirit as the revealer of Christ in the heart; no taste of the Father's everlasting love, nor of communion with him through the ministration of the Holy Ghost; no feeling of grace in a way of conviction, comfort, and sanctification; no hungerings and thirstings after spiritual enjoyments and sweet assurances; no motive tendencies, no outgoings of soul, after the blood, righteousness, and intercession of Jesus Christ. If we experience these,

they are indications of spiritual life: and we may take those reviving words to ourselves, Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

5. Beg the Lord to show you the depth of your fall. Free grace, finished salvation, imputed righteousness, atoning blood, unchangeable mercy, and the whole chain of evangelical blessings, will then be infinitely precious to your heart.

6. Prize the covenant of redemption, which is a better covenant, and founded upon better promises, than that which Adam broke. The covenant of works said, "Do, and live: sin, and die." The covenant of grace says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The covenant of works insisted on a perfection of personal obedience; the covenant of grace provided and accepts the perfect atonement and righteousness of Christ as ours.

This shows both the folly and wickedness of depending on our own works for salvation. Which soul-destroying delusion is founded on ignorance that the covenant of works was broken and annulled the very moment Adam fell. I mean, annulled, as to any possibility of salvation by it: else it is still in full force, as the ministration of condemnation and death to every soul that finally clings to it for pardon and eternal life. Man unfallen, might have been saved by works. But there is no deliverance for fallen man, except by the free grace of the Father, and the imputed righteousness of a sacrificed Redeemer. —Therefore,

7. Let the sense of our original depravation, of our continued vileness, and the impossibility of our being saved in a legal way, induce us to prize the blood, obedience, and intercession of Jesus, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. This is the inference, drawn by the apostle himself, from the doctrine I have been asserting. Therefore, says he,

as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men [even upon all the elect themselves], unto condemnation; so, by the righteousness of one, the free-gift came upon all men [upon all the elect, believing world] unto justification of life: for as, by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous, Rom. v. 18, 19.—And, elsewhere, St. Paul reasons in the same manner: All [i. e. all God's elect, no less than others] have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. What is the consequence? It is immediately added, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. 23, 24.

8. Hence likewise appear the necessity and value of effectual calling. Why does our Lord say, that, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God? Because we are totally sinful and corrupt by nature: as unfit for, and as incapable of enjoying the glories of the celestial world; as a beetle is, of being elevated to the dignity and office of a first minister of state.

9. Since such is the natural condition of man, with regard to spiritual things; take heed that you do not look upon election, justification, redemption, and regeneration, as mere technical terms, belonging to divinity as a system, or science. They are infinitely more. These and such like terms are expressive of the greatest and most important realities; without the experience of which, we are condemned, ruined, lost.

10. The doctrine of original sin is the basis of the millennium. The earth, which is disordered and put out of course, through the offence of man, will be restored to its primitive beauty, purity, and regularity, when Jesus shall descend to reign in person with his saints, 2 Pet. iii. 13.

11. Original sin accounts for the remaining imperfections, too visible in them that are born of God.

The brightest saints below ever had, and ever will have, their dark sides. Abraham, Noah, Job, David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Paul, Peter, John, were sanctified but in part. On earth, God's converted people are each a compound of light, and shades. In glory we shall be all light, without any mixture of shade whatever.

12. Since the earth and its inhabiters are degenerated from their original state, let not believers be afraid to die.

"Death has no pang, but what frail life imparts;
Nor life true joy, but what kind death improves."

By quitting its mortal cage, the heaven-born soul is delivered from all its sins, and cares, and pains; and kindles into perfection of holiness, and majesty, and joy. At the appointed time, the body too will partake of complete redemption; and be delivered, totally and eternally delivered, into the glorious liberty and dignity of the children of God.——— Accomplish, Lord, the number of thine elect, and hasten thy kingdom!

AN

# ESSAY

ON THE

## VARIOUS FEARS TO WHICH GOD'S PEOPLE ARE LIABLE.

"*Within were fears.*"—2 Cor. vii. 5.

Fear is, properly speaking, that uneasiness of mind, which arises from the apprehension of some impending evil.

Spiritually taken, fear, as it respects God for its object, is of two kinds; legal and evangelical: i. e. law fear, and gospel fear.

Legal fear is an horror, occasioned by the mere expectation of punishment, without any mixture of love to the punisher. Such is the fear of the apostate angels; and such the fear, which agitates reprobate souls, when conscience is let loose, and when the thunderings and lightnings of God's fiery law set themselves in array against the haters of Christ.—On the contrary,

Evangelical fear is peculiar to God's regenerate people; and consists in a melting humiliation for sin; accompanied, at times, especially in secret prayer, with gracious groanings which cannot be uttered; with a degree of self-abhorrence, and of self-renunciation; with a longing for the favour, the resemblance, and the presence of God, in the soul. And all this, not from a mere wish to avoid punishment; but likewise from a concern for having lost the image of God's holiness, for having crucified

the Saviour of sinners, and for having grieved and been estranged from the adorable Spirit of grace. It is easy to observe, that here is a strong mixture of love toward all the persons of the Trinity: and it is by this love (though perhaps weak as a burning thread, and small as a grain of mustard-seed) that evangelical fear is chiefly distinguished from legal. The latter is the unaffectionate awe of an indignant slave, who is forced to submit against his will, who hates the hand that strikes, who loves nothing but ease, and dreads nothing but the lash. While the sinner, who experiences the fear which is evangelical, abhors sin for its own sake, as contrary to the nature and command of the blessed God; and abhors himself, for sin's sake, and because he is the subject of that detested principle which sets him at so great distance from the moral likeness of infinite purity and excellence.

Concerning legal fear, we read, that there is no fear [i. e. no fear of that kind] in love: for perfect love casteth out fear: meaning, that the sense of God's love is no sooner shed abroad with full lustre and efficacy in the soul; than legal fear vanishes away, and continues extinct, during the shine of God's Spirit on the conscience. Concerning evangelical fear, we read, Blessed is the man that feareth always; who is tenderly solicitous to avoid any thing and every thing, which may render him spiritually unlike that holy, glorious, and gracious Being, whom he ardently wishes to resemble, and hold communion with.

But, beside this filial, salutary fear, which is one grand mark of regeneration; a believer, while he sojourns upon earth, is liable to fears of a mixed heterogeneous kind, which seem to be partly legal and partly evangelical. To this head may be referred anxious doubtings, painful misgivings, and the evil surmisings of remaining unbelief. These are occasioned, directly and immediately, by the imper-

fection of inherent grace below: and remotely, by the permissive appointment of God, who has decreed, that perfect happiness must be waited for till we get home to heaven. Were our graces complete, our bliss would be complete too: in which case, we should no longer be men, but angels. For a saint made perfect is an angel of the highest order, and a perfection of grace is glory itself.

In the meanwhile, it is even needful for the Christian traveller to be exercised with a thorn in the flesh; and to be at times in such a state, as may convince him that earth is not his rest, or a mount whereon to pitch tabernacles of continuance; that he must carry his cross, before he receives his crown; that he must combat, before he conquers; and sow in tears, antecedently to his reaping in joy. I believe from scripture, from observation, and from experience, that all God's people do occasionally pass under the cloud, and are baptized unto Christ in the cloud and in the sea of spiritual darkness and distress. Jesus himself, though he had no sin, was thus baptized. All thy waves and storms (said David, in the person of the Messiah, and addressing himself to God the Father) are gone over me. Even from my youth up, thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.

No wonder then that the members should be sprinkled with those waters, which were poured in torrents on the mystic head. And let the suffering members of Christ's elect body remember, to their great and endless comfort, that even tormenting fears are perfectly consistent with the reality of grace. This was the psalmist's state, and the psalmist's experience: Though I am sometimes afraid, yet put I my trust in thee.

Hence it is evident, that faith and fear, though not good friends, are sometimes very near neighbours; yea, that they often lodge in one house, i. e. in one and the same heart. Indeed, they

seldom appear together: for when the one walks abroad, the other usually keeps close within doors. When faith is alert and active, fear hangs its head and pines. When fear is lively, faith takes to its bed and languishes. So strong is the antipathy of the two principles, that the sickness of one is the health of the other.

They are perpetually quarrelling and skirmishing. And though fear now and then gives faith an home thrust, faith will most certainly (and sometimes she knows it) get the better at last, and survive her adversary. Yet, though faith will infallibly outlive fear, faith is not immortal. She too must die, and that by God's own hand: for she is so strong, even when weakest, that none can deprive her of existence, but he that gave it. Her death will be a willing and a delightful one. When the hour comes, she herself will not wish to live a moment longer. The soul, in which she dwells, being severed from its body, and taken up to heaven; faith gladly and triumphantly expires, under the meridian blaze of sight. In the mean while, there are times, when, brightening into full assurance, she longs for her own annihilation, and is even straightened until it be accomplished. At length, having acted as the believer's companion and guide through the wilderness, she sees him safe to the threshold of heaven: and, the very instant he steps over that threshold, and enters within the vail, she takes her leave of him for ever.

As to fear, though she may, in some believers, keep pace with faith, and even outrun faith, during the greatest part of the earthly race; yet the waters of death (if she die not before) will kill her effectually and finally. The mere prospect of that stream may perhaps give her fresh vivacity and strength; but no sooner does she begin actually to touch that water, than she expires; and the renewed soul, which had been, through her means, all its life-

time subject to bondage, passes the river with courage, serenity, and joy. Holy desire cuts the cable. Faith hoists the flag. Prayer spreads the sail, and God's Spirit breathes the auspicious breeze. All the graces of the heart are in exercise, and ply their oars to the music of hovering angels. The dividing waters present a smooth expanse for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over. All is harmony. All is bliss. And thus does the precious freight, the disembodied soul, land in triumph, on the golden coast; and, hardly staying to take a view of her dead enemies on the opposite shore, makes directly to the presence of God, and to the throne of him that was slain.

Unwillingly I return to earth, and withdrawing my mind from a contemplation of the glory that shall be revealed, descend to consider the various fears to which all God's converted people, and myself among the rest, are subject, while imprisoned in a body of clay.

Within are fears. For that sorceress, whose name is fear, can transform herself into a multiplicity of shapes, though she is in reality, the same identical hag in all.

Sometimes she assumes the mantle of pretended humility; and whispers, that "we must not give absolute credit to God's covenant and promises, nor aspire to the comfort and enjoyment of them, for fear of being presumptuous."

Anon, she wears the mask of caution: "Do not rejoice in God's election, and in Christ's righteousness, for fear of being a self-deceiver." Whereas, in reality, all who can embrace the free favour of God, and all who can lay hold on the righteousness of Christ, have a covenant right to both. And why should not they who have a right to these, rejoice in the God to whose rich and immutable grace they are indebted for it?

At another time, fear accosts us in the garb of affected holiness; "you must bring," says she, "a

price in your hand, to God the Father; or Christ's redemption will profit you nothing. Do not undervalue yourself, by supposing that you can do no good work before you are justified. I tell you, that you must work for life and justification. You must do good works, in order to be accepted; and fulfil a string of terms and conditions, seeing you are to be saved for your works, because of your works, yea, according to the merits of your works." But thou, O believer in Christ, flee these abominable doctrines. Hearken not to them, as you value the glory of God, the freeness of grace, the riches of Christ, the interests of real holiness, and your own happiness. Remember that the conditions of fallen man's salvation are two, and no more: namely, perfect atonement for sin, and perfect obedience to the law. Both these conditions Christ has completely fulfilled, in the stead, and for the infallible salvation, of every soul that comes to his blood for cleansing, and to his righteousness for clothing. "To what end, then, serves faith?" To let thee into the knowledge, possession, and enjoyment of this free and finished redemption. "And to what end serve good works?" Not to entitle us to God's favour, or even to pave (much less to pay) our way to his kingdom: but to glorify his name, to adorn his gospel, to evidence our adoption, and benefit others on our road to heaven.

Fear very frequently mimics the voice of prudence; and advises us, as a friend, "Not to bring odium and inconveniences upon ourselves, by too strict a moral walk, and by a too resolute assertion of the doctrines of Christ." How bitterly did poor Peter weep for having listened to this syren song! And what rending agonies of heart did he feel for his sham prudence, after the arrow of recovering grace, shot from the eye of Christ, had pierced his inmost soul! O thou almighty Son of God, save thy people from the fear of man. Not only pray for us, as thou

didst for Peter, that our faith fail not (and thy prayer was heard: for his faith itself failed not, though his (*a*) profession of it did); but pray also, in our behalf, that our faith may never even seem to fail.

Fear is sometimes apt to beset those, who, of all persons in the world, should have nothing to do with it, unless to trample it under their feet. I mean, the ministers of God's word. O ye standard-bearers of the Most High, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Good Mrs. Ayscough, who was burned for the protestant faith, when she was offered her pardon at the stake, on condition she would renounce the truth, cried out, with holy indignation, I did not come hither to deny my Lord and master. I desire to remember her words, every time I ascend the pulpit. A mincing, timid, partial declaration of the gospel, is a virtual denial of Christ himself. Rather die, with the gospel standard in your hands, than resign a thread of it to the enemy: like heroic Valasco, the Spanish general, who, when the Havannah was taken by the English, scorned to surrender the national flag, and nobly expired with his colours wrapped round his arm. But there are seasons of personal dryness and darkness, when fear, like an armed man, assaults the faith and liveliness of God's ambassadors. They are perhaps at a loss even for a subject to preach from. All resources seem to be shut up. They flit in their own minds, from text to text, and for a long time, can fix on none. They cry, in secret, Lord, how can we spread the table for thy people, except thou bring the venison to our hands? or, with the disciples of old, whence shall we have bread for the multitude, here in the wilderness? "The dear people flock to the word, as doves to their windows;

(*a*) Defecit quidem professio in ore, non autem fides in corde.
AUGUSTIN.

and we, alas, have little or nothing to feed them with." At such times of doubt and barrenness, cast yourself at large upon God, and distribute the word as you are enabled. In all probability, the fishes and the loaves will increase in your hands, and God will administer bread enough and to spare. It is kind and wise in the holy Spirit, to make us feel that we are nothing, and that the excellency of the power is of him and not of us. The lesson of dependence upon his arm of grace alone, is profitable, though not always palatable, to our proud, deceitful hearts. To the glory of the divine faithfulness, I say it, that, for my own part, some of my happiest pulpit opportunities have been, when I have gone up the stairs with trembling knees and a dejected spirit: nay (twice or thrice in my life-time) when I have been so far reduced, as to be unable to fix on a text, till the psalm or hymn was almost over. These are not desirable trials: but they redound, however, to the praise of him, who has said, Without me ye can do nothing; and whose almighty love can elicit light out of darkness, even out of darkness that may be felt.

On the whole, let all God's people, both ministers and private Christians, come to the Lord by prayer, for deliverance from the fears that do most easily beset them. Bind them up in a bundle, and throw them at the foot of the cross, and implore God's Spirit to shine them away. Be humbled on account of them: but not discouraged. Proclaim eternal hostility against unbelieving fear, in all its branches: but know, that it is God who must teach your hands to war, and your fingers to fight.

No man appears to have been more subject to fears and cares, than David: though he had been enabled to vanquish a lion, and to slay a giant. What course did he take for relief, in his hours of distress and tremor? He prayed to him that is mighty to save. And his success was answerable.

I sought the Lord, and he heard me: yea, he delivered me out of all my fears.

Several of the fears to which God's people are exposed, have already been considered. The enumeration of a few more, shall conclude the subject.

1. Weak believers are sometimes apt to be afraid, that they are not in the number of God's elect. They can indeed say with David, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee:" but they are not clearly satisfied, that this blessedness is theirs.

For my own part, I look upon it as one of the best symptoms of a regenerate state, when a person is ardently desirous to know his election of God. It is an enquiry, which the generality of mankind never trouble themselves about; and which none but a true believer is concerned for in earnest. We read of some, in the Acts of the Apostles, who had never heard of such a person as the Holy Ghost: and, I fear, there are too many who have hardly ever heard whether there be such a thing as eternal, gratuitous, personal, and immutable election. Of those who have, too many set themselves to oppose it: and labour (though blessed be God, they labour in vain) to stop up the very fountain of salvation, and to cut down that tree of life, whose leaves and fruits are for the healing of the nations. A fierce free-will sister in Cornwall was lately heard to say, that she dreaded to open the Bible, for fear of meeting with predestination and election. And it has been affirmed, of a very noted Arminian clergyman, that he should, one day, address his audience as follows: Brethren, many people talk about an electing God. I, on the contrary, assert, that there is no such being. If there is an electing God, why does he not strike me dead before you all? But you see, my brethren, I am not struck dead. Therefore, there is no electing God.

Very different are the ideas of Christ's humbled, awakened servants. When a ray of God's everlasting love shines in upon their hearts, they cry out, with the royal and devout predestinarian of ancient Israel, "How dear are thy counsels," i. e. thy purposes and decrees, "to me, O God! Oh, how great is the sum," i. e. how inestimable is the value "of them! If I should declare them, or speak of them, they are more than I am able to express." The Lord has some, yea, many names, even in our Sardis, who not only profess to believe the scriptures of truth, but also make good their profession, by believing, and by practically adoring, the truths of the scriptures. Such enlightened persons will ever be desirous not barely to admit those truths, in a mere doctrinal way alone; but to experience the efficacy of them, and to be feelingly interested in the blessings themselves.

Granting, however, that thousands of converted people have not attained to those heights of exalted consolation, as to be able to say, with an unfaultering tongue, "Thou hast chosen me, and not cast me away:" yet is there some secret comfort even in waiting upon God for the joy of his salvation, in seeking the light of his countenance, and in crediting the truths and promises of the gospel at large. To those who are by grace, led thus far, I would beg leave to propose the following questions, without presuming to wade more deeply into the sacred profound of those decrees which lie hid in God, than his written word permits. By way then, of combating your fears, let me ask:

Art thou desirous of choosing God in Christ to be thy Father, thy portion, and thy covenant God, here and ever? If you are, it is one happy proof that God has chosen thee to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. You could not choose him, if he had not first chosen you.

Is love to God, in any measure, kindled in thy heart? Or, if you are in any doubt as to this, do you wish to love him? Would you be glad to receive him, to embrace him, and to hold him fast, as your chief and only good? Take courage. Wishing is a degree of love. No man ever wished for the thing which he altogether hated. A wisher for Christ, is a lover of Christ. And you could not love him, if he had not first loved you. Wishing is a fruit of the Father's drawings.

Is the law of God written on thy mind? That is, can you say with the apostle, that "to will is present with you," and that you "delight in the law of God, after the inner man?" Would it make you easy and happy, and would you have the supreme desire of your heart, were you to be holy as God is holy, and pure as Christ is pure? Then you may add, as the apostle does, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ." The Lord would not thus have written his law (however imperfectly at present) upon thy heart, if the pen of his own free grace had not first written thy name in the book of life.

This is a blessed consideration: and as sure as it is blessed. Yet, stop not here: but pray for the witness of the holy Spirit, to bear unclouded testimony to thy spirit, that thou art a child of God. Say, as the Psalmist did, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest to thy own people! O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice with the gladness of thy nation, and give thanks with thine inheritance." Wait the appointed time: and God will set that promise, as a seal, upon thy heart; "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine."

2. Saints are subject to another fear: viz. that they are not truly converted, and that their spot is not the spot of God's children. Nor do I wonder, that, when grace is not in lively exercise, they are

liable to apprehensions of this kind: when I consider man's absolute unworthiness, even in his best estate; and that astonishing mixture of good and evil, which is more or less visible in saints below.

Though I am by no means an advocate for doubting; I am yet of opinion, that, through the alchymy of divine wisdom, even doubts and fears, though not desirable in themselves, are ultimately subservient to the advantage of God's chosen: just as in the material world, not a thorn is without its use, and every bramble has its value.

Spiritual distresses and misgivings have a tendency, through grace, to keep us sensible of our sinfulness and helplessness (as Paul's temptations clipt the wings of his pride, and restrained him from being exalted above measure). They conduce to make us watchful and circumspect; to make us feel the pulse of our souls, by frequent and severe self-examination; to kindle longing aspirations after God and communion with him; to lay us low at the footstool of Jehovah's sovereignty; to endear Christ's blood, righteousness, and intercession; and put us upon looking up to the holy Spirit in prayer, for the support of his presence, and for the unction of his comforts, which alone are able to enlighten and to chase away the darkness of our minds.

There is likewise another particular, which ought to encourage the mourners in Zion: namely, that it is impossible for any, who have not been spiritually quickened from above, to pant for God as a thirsty land; to grieve, evangelically, from a heart-felt sense of sin; and to be pained, after a godly sort. A good man, of the last century, somewhere observes, that "He who cries out, I am dead; proves himself by that very cry, to be alive." Can a dead person feel? Can a dead man complain? A believer may lament his deadness; but he cannot lament his death, without his lips refuting themselves. There must be spiritual life, or there could be no

spiritual sensibility, no spiritual motion, no spiritual breathings. The pregnant woman that longs, must be alive. If the Lord had not drawn you, you would not follow hard after him. Nor could you say, "The desire of my soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee;" unless God's Spirit had awakened that desire in your heart. If you was not truly converted, you would not be so anxious about the truth of your conversion. It is not the untamed bird of prey, that pours the plaintive strain. No: it is the dove that mourns: it is the nightingale that sings with her breast against a thorn.

However, though a weeping state is a safe one, and not without its advantages; yet there is a still more excellent way. The diffident should be encouraged: but diffidence itself should not. Covet earnestly the best gifts. Aspire to the choicest attainments. Pray for unclouded manifestations. Cultivate spiritual fellowship with God, in all the means of grace, both private and public. Endeavour to drink deep into holiness, and to be fruitful in every good word and work. Conversation with experienced Christians operates frequently as a step to gracious improvements. God's people are sometimes blessed to the rubbing off the rust of unbelief, and to the mutual elision of light and heat from each other.—Lay hold on Christ, as well as you can, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: committing yourself, for better for worse, to his grace, which worketh all in all. Thus it would be evident, that you are indeed planted in the Lord's house, and belong to that invisible church which he purchased with his own blood. Nay, you will gradually flourish in the courts of God, grow as the lily, and cast forth the root as Lebanon. Your conversion will be made clear to you. You will see your tokens. You will no longer have reason to doubt, whether the good

work of grace is begun in you: but your path, like a burning light, will shine more and more (in general) to the perfect day.

3. Believers are sometimes prone to fear, that they have no real covenant interest in Christ; or, that they are not in a state of pardon and justification. "Oh," says the doubting Christian, "if I could but know that I have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of my sins; that Christ undertook for me, in the eternal covenant of grace, and that he is the Lord my righteousness; I should be happy indeed: but, alas! such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me; I cannot attain unto it." Be it so, that you cannot attain to it: God is not the less able to give it. He can, as the apostle expresses it, not only grant you, but even fill you with "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Therefore, if you want assurance of salvation, ask it at the throne. But ask it with submission, and with a reserve to the will of God. Do not let your ultimate desires terminate in any thing short of God himself; nor so hang upon comforts, as to overlook the Comforter. Assurances are the brightest bridal jewels of a soul that is married to Christ: but the bridegroom himself is better than the jewels he gives; nor does he in general, allow his bride to shine in them every day. He keeps them under his own key, and lets her wear them when he pleases. At worst, remember that he is your husband still, and the God who changes not. Venture yourself, therefore, on board his blood and righteousness, as a mariner trusts himself to the vessel in which he embarks. Do this, and you shall be carried safe to the haven where you would be. You may be shaken on your passage, but not forsaken; tost, but not lost. The mediation of Christ, the faithfulness of your covenant Father, and the never failing love of the Holy Ghost, will bear you up, and bear you home. No man ever suffered

Christ will deliver you, as at the first; and restore you, as at the beginning. What was prophesied concerning Gad (Gen. xlix. 19.) shall be spiritually fulfilled in you: a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.

6. A sixth fear occasions no small uneasiness to weak believers: namely, a fear lest they should not be faithful unto death, nor hold on in grace to the end. But if God has given thee good evidences of thy being truly regenerated, and of thy being his child through faith in Christ Jesus; thou mayest, upon the strength of thy adoption, be as certain of thy final perseverance, as if thy warfare was actually accomplished, and the crown of glory set upon thy head.

The invisible, or elect church, consists of only one and the same innumerable family; part of which is in heaven, and part on earth (Eph. iii. 15.) Every individual member of this family, whether militant below, or triumphant above, is equally safe in the hands of Christ. Saints in glory are, indeed, happier than saints on earth: but saints on earth are no less eventually secure of salvation, than saints in glory. The spirits of just men made perfect might as soon fall from their state of heavenly blessedness, as a sanctified person here fall from a state of grace. The names of both are in the book of life. They are alike interested in God's everlasting and unalterable covenant. What the Father's love has given to the glorified, will be also given to them that are yet behind: for to this end Christ died and rose again, that he might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad (John ii. 52.): and, by the single offering of himself, he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Saints are not their own keepers; and it is well for them that they are not: they would be sorrily kept, if they were. Adam was his own keeper; and what did he get by it? The fallen angels were their own keepers. Peter

kept himself; but how long? God's chosen are not thus finally left in the hand of their own counsel, nor trusted to their own management. All his saints are in thy hand, i. e. in the hand of Christ, Deut. xxxiii. 3.; from whence none can pluck them, John x. Which general promise of the perseverance of God's elect, taken as a collective body, ascertains and ensures the perseverance of each believer in particular. For, the whole necessarily includes every part; and, where any individual part is absent, it destroys the entireness of the whole; just as the human body is not complete, if only one limb, or even a single finger, or so much as a piece of a finger, be wanting. The philosophic integrity vanishes, from that instant: for, posito toto, ponuntur partes: and sublata parte, tollitur totum. So that what is affirmed concerning the aggregate, is equally affirmed concerning the constituent members respectively, of which that aggregate consists: otherwise the affirmation would be essentially untrue; which to charge Christ with, were blasphemy.

Let the follower of Christ, therefore, dismiss all slavish fear as to his continuance in grace; and, in well-doing, leave the care of that to God. They who belong to him are kept, and will be kept, by his power through faith, unto salvation itself: and may sing, with him that was caught up into the third heavens, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Neither life nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to do it. There is no being disinherited of the blessings entailed by God's covenant, and bequeathed in Christ's last will and testament, signed with his own blood, and sealed by his own spirit. Saving grace is the good part, which shall not be taken away. Whatever you lose, it is impossible for you to lose that. It is bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God, and hid with Christ in him. And when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then

shall ye also, who have believed, appear with him in glory.

7. I shall mention one other fear common to many of God's redeemed, viz. the fear of death. Some true believers are apt to cry out (as the human nature of Christ himself did) Father, save me from this hour.

But why are you so dismayed at the prospect of getting home? Are you afraid of dying, or of what you may suffer in your last conflict? Turn again to your rest; for the Lord will deal bountifully with you, and be better to you than your fears.

"————Who can take
Death's portrait true?
Fear shakes the pencil: Fancy loves excess:
Dark ignorance is lavish of her shades;
And these the formidable picture draw.
Man forms a death that nature never made;
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one."

None returns from the grave to tell us what it is to die. Some happy believers have indeed sung in their last moments, "O death, where is thy once imagined sting? Can this be termed dying?" And, very probably, the passage is both sweeter and smoother than living imagination is apt to suppose. I lost an excellent parishioner in the year 1765. Though he had not the least doubt of his salvation, but, as far as spiritual and eternal things were concerned, lay for many weeks triumphing in the full assurance of faith; he still dreaded the separation of soul and body, from an apprehension of what nature must endure in the parting stroke. Some little time before the knot was actually untied, God was pleased to indulge him with a foretaste of death. He was, for near an hour, quite gone in appearance: and his family began to conclude, that the final struggle

was over. By degrees, however, he came to himself: and on my asking him how he did, he answered, that God had given him a specimen of death, and he found it not so terrible as he apprehended. From that period, all his dread of dying vanished away; and he continued without any shadow of fear, filled with the peace which passeth all understanding, until his disimprisoned spirit flew to the bosom of God. Oh then, whoever thou art, that art troubled in like manner, cast thy burden on the Lord. You have found him faithful in other things, and you may safely trust him for this. He has delivered you in six troubles, and in the seventh he will be nigh unto you. The water-floods shall not overflow thee, neither shall the deep swallow thee up. The rock of ages lies at the bottom of the brook; and God will give you firm footing all the way through.

Or, are you afraid of the consequences of death, and what will come after? Throw yourself upon God in Christ, and you are safe. "Christ's righteousness is law-proof, death-proof, and judgment-proof."

Are you fearful what may become of your family when God calls you away? Make your family over to him. Nominate Jehovah for their guardian and trustee. Cast anchor upon that comfortable promise: Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.

Do you dread the buffetings of satan? God will not let him take advantage of your weakness. You shall overcome, yea, you shall be more than conquerors, through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.

Are you apprehensive lest your faith be small, and your sanctification imperfect? Christ will be praying for you, that your faith fail not: and the Holy Ghost will take care not to leave his work of grace upon thy soul unfinished.

You tremble, perhaps, at the thought of laying aside your weak, sinful, mortal, body. But you will

receive it again: not such as it now is, frail, defiled, and perishable; but bright with the glory, and perfect in the image of God. The body is that to the soul, which a garment is to the body. When you betake yourself to repose at night, you lay aside your clothes until morning; and resume them, when you rise. What is the grave, but the believer's wardrobe, of which God is the door-keeper? In the resurrection morning, the door will be thrown open, and the glorified soul shall descend from heaven to put on a glorified robe, which was indeed folded up and laid away in dishonour; but shall be taken out from the repository, enriched and beautified with all the ornaments of nature and of grace.

Are you loth to bid a long adieu to your Christian friends? The adieu will not be a long one. They will soon follow, to the place of rest. And, in the mean time, you will be with Christ, and with all the saints who have been gathered home before you: which is far better.

Should I be asked, What is the grand remedy against undue fear, of every possible kind? I answer, in one word: Communion with God. "He," says good Dr. Owen, "who would be little in temptation, must be much in prayer." Ply the mercy seat. Eye the blood of Christ. Cry mightily to the Spirit of God. To which I add: Wait at the footstool, in holy stillness of soul. Sink into nothing, before the uncreated Majesty. If he shine within, you will fear nothing from without. What made the martyrs fearless? Their souls were filled with Christ. Jesus lifted up the beams of his love upon their minds, and they smiled at all the fires which man could kindle.

To enjoy communion with God, you must be found in the way of duty. If you play the truant, no wonder you are afraid of being whipped.—— "Those trees," says the excellent Mr. Gurnall, "bear the sweetest fruit, which stand most in the

sun." Take heed to the thing which is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last. The meaning of which text is, that by virtue of the wise connection which infinite wisdom hath established between antecedents and consequents, holy walking is the high road to holy comforts.

Your walk, perhaps, is strict and conscientious: and yet, it may be, you complain of doubts and darkness notwithstanding. Here, examine yourself: 1. Whether you do not work from legal principles, and to legal ends? If so, no wonder, that, like a slave with the lash at his shoulders, you toil all day and take nothing. Christ alone is the righteousness of them that believe. God will never set the seal of his gracious presence to the broken Sinai covenant. Whoever enjoys, or thinks he enjoys, comfort and peace from the works of his own hands, and from the duties he performs, is blinded and deluded into a fool's paradise, by the god of this world. The Lord meets his people in the way of duty, but not for it: as a father, who meets his son on a journey, at some appointed house, meets him in that house, but not for the sake of the house. Live upon what Christ is made to you of God, and you will find comfort. But if you seek happiness and establishment from yourself, or from any thing wrought by yourself, you will receive no solid nourishment from the breast of that sham consolation.

Or, 2. Christ may be all your hope, and yet your fears may continue to run high. Look narrowly into your own heart. See that there be no Achan in the camp, no beloved lust in the tent. I dare not say, that the sense of God's love is always connected with the actings of faith, and with the concomitant exercise of holiness. But I suppose that faith and sanctification are the usual correlatives of joy in the Holy Ghost. Art thou melted by grace, into a filial fear of God? Go on to fear, to love,

and to obey, whether the Lord gild thy path with sunshine, or darken it with gloom. He is the sovereign dispenser of his own comforts; and may withhold, or confer them, as seemeth good in his sight. But it is thy indispensable duty to follow the Lamb, and to do his will, whether he cheers you with his consolations, or not. Certain it is, from the infallible word of his grace, that to you who look unto Jesus, all the sweet privileges of the gospel belong: and joy is one of them. Though it tarry, wait for it; for it will not deceive thy expectation; it will surely arrive at the appointed season, and will not linger a moment beyond. O ye of fearful hearts, be strong: Your God will come with a recompence, he will come and save you. Your prayers may not be answered immediately; but they are all strung on the file of his remembrance, and shall be answered after many days. Your fears are in his phial.—Your groans are noted in his book. Delight thou in the Lord, and he will give thee thy heart's desire; hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently for him. Commit thy way to the Lord; put thy trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass.

I knew a most valuable Christian, who died in the year 1760; and in her last illness was greatly exercised with darkness of soul: which, however, did not finally continue. While God was leading her through the wilderness of mental distress, she still anchored on the promises, though she had lost sight of the promiser: and, as a proof of her absolute dependance on the faithfulness of a withdrawing God, she directed, that (instead of the usual inscription of name and age) the following text should be engraven (and engraven it was) on the plate of her coffin: Deal with me, O God, according to thy name, for sweet is thy mercy. Thus, as the great Dr. Manton long ago expressed it, "Faith accepts God's bond, and patience waits for payment."

# CHRISTMAS MEDITATIONS

ON

## GENESIS xlix. 10.

*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

THIS remarkable passage is a link of that grand chain of prophecy, which was delivered by the patriarch Jacob, on his dying bed. Such are the faithfulness and the condescending grace of God, that he frequently brightens the last hours of his people, with the richest displays of his power and presence: nor does any thing short of heaven itself, afford a nobler sight, than that of a believer standing on the verge of eternity, filled with the faith which casts out fear, happy in the assured possession of grace, and longing for the completion of that grace in glory.

Hence, I have often wondered how any considerate person can be an enemy to the doctrine of assurance. There is but one thing, which can render death terrible; namely, our being at an uncertainty, as to the reception we shall meet with at the hands of God. Certainly, then, the knowledge of salvation, by the forgiveness of sin, through the tender mercy of our God (Luke i. 77.), is a privilege which well deserves to be wished and prayed for. To have the Spirit of God bearing witness to our spirits that we are children of God (Rom. viii. 16.), is, at least, a very desirable blessing. And, were our hearts thoroughly awakened to a sense of divine things, it would be impossible for us to sit

down, easy and contented, without some degree of this exceeding great and precious gift. Surely, it behoves us to cultivate that, in life, which is the only infallible antidote against the terrors of death! I do not say, that assurance of my own personal interest in Jesus, is essential to my faith as a real believer in him: but I am positively clear, that it is essential to my fulness of comfort. Assurance adds nothing to the esse justificationis, or to the being of justification: but it adds much to the bene esse justificati, or to the well-being of a justified person.

Holy Jacob was fully satisfied as to the safety of his soul. He knew that his name was written in the book of life; and that his salvation was settled, in the eternal covenant of grace and redemption. He had a blessed conviction, that the Son of God, whose human nature was to descend from his loins in the tribe of Judah, had undertaken to atone for his sins; and to clothe him, by imputation, with a perfect righteousness. In consequence of this faith, when the time drew near that Israel must die (chap. xlvii. 29.), Jacob drew near to the time, with as much joy, as the time drew near to him with speed. For we find him (chap. xlviii. 21.) speaking of his own approaching death, with as much ease and complacency, as if he was only setting out on a journey of pleasure: "Israel said unto Joseph, behold, I die." He perceived the symptoms of advancing dissolution: and the prospect conduced, not to alarm his fears, nor to rivet him closer to the world; but operated like the shining of the sun, or the breathings of zephyr, on a flower. It expanded his hope; enlarged his desire for heaven; and diffused the fragrance of his faith, on all within the sphere of his conversation.

As greatly as this eminent saint longed to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; he would not die, until he had first taken a solemn leave of his family, by blessing them in the name of the Lord, and by

predicting the fate of their posterities. At present, I shall only consider his last address to Judah, his fourth son. Judah, thou art he, whom thy brethren shall praise: i. e. thy tribe shall be the most conspicuous and distinguished, on various accounts. In that portion of Canaan, which fall to thy descendants and to those of Benjamin, the city of Jerusalem shall be built, and the temple of God shall stand. But chiefly shalt thou be celebrated, as the progenitor of that spotless mother, from whom the Son of God shall derive his inferior nature: and, within the near neighbourhood of thy territory, shall he suffer and expire, for the salvation of his people.

Thy hand shall be in the neck of thy enemies, and thy father's children shall bow down before thee: referring to that valour, and success in war, for which this tribe became so eminent, and so respected by its neighbours. This is expressed, with still greater sublimity, at verse 9. Judah is a lion's whelp: though young, yet strong, courageous, formidable, and magnanimous. From the prey, my son, thou art gone up: victorious as that king of beasts, when he ascends with majestic pace, from the plains to the mountains; flushed with the conquest, and red with the slaughter of inferior animals. He stooped down; he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up? Implying, that this branch of the Israelitish nation should enjoy (as in fact they did) a long series of rest, honour, and prosperity; and that the tribe of Judah could no more be insulted with safety, than a sheep or a deer can rouse and irritate a lion with impunity.——What grandeur and vivacity of genius must Jacob retain, even in that hour when strength and genius usually fail, to be able to convey his ideas in such august terms, and in a flow of such highly poetic imagery! Who, that reads this chapter, would imagine, that elevated strains like these,

strains which would have done honour to the muse of Homer, warbled from the lips of a dying man, of a man too, labouring under the utmost bodily decays of age, and over whose 'head no fewer than 147 years had past!

But the most valuable part of the prophecy, is that which relates to the incarnation of Jesus Christ: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and to him shall the gathering of the people be.

Of all regal ornaments, the sceptre is believed to be the most ancient. And, probably, its origin was extremely simple. It seems to have taken its rise from the crook, wielded, in earliest times, by the harmless hand of a shepherd. Agreeably to which idea, the Hebrew verb רוּעַ signifies, he fed, he exercised the office of a shepherd; and, likewise, he ruled, he governed as a magistrate. So the Greek word ποιμην, a shepherd, is derived from the verb ποιμαινω, which imports, both to feed, and to govern. A staff, primarily the instrument and the emblem of pastoral superintendency, appears to have been, from thence, transferred to the hand of royalty. So that, whenever kings look upon their sceptre, that significant ensign of authority should remind them of the tender affection they owe to their people; and of that fine lesson, addressed to each of our English bishops at the time of their consecration (a lesson equally proper for princes, as for prelates): "Be to the flock of Christ, a shepherd, not a wolf. Feed them: devour them not. Hold up the weak. Heal the sick. Bind up the broken. Bring again the outcasts. Seek the lost. Be so merciful, that you be not too remiss: so minister discipline, that you neglect not mercy (*a*)." Some ancient sceptres (particularly of the earlier kings of France) are affirmed to have been considerably longer than a mo-

(*a*) Office for Consecration of Bishops.

dern walking-stick, and to have been curved at the higher end, exactly like a shepherd's rod. The Greek word σκηπτρον (from whence the Latin *sceptrum*, and the English sceptre) properly denotes a staff, or wand, of sufficient length for a person to lean upon: and the Hebrew שבט is, in strictness, a staff, made of a shoot, or straight bough of a tree. Such as were the staves of the primitive shepherds and herdsmen.

By that sceptre, which, for a given time, was not to depart from Judah, is undoubtedly meant, the administration of temporal power. Hence the Septuagint render the passage, by Ουκ εκλειψει αρχων εξ Ιουδα, A supreme governor shall not fail out of Judah; i. e. the supreme government in that tribe, shall be Jewish, until the Messiah's advent. The words, sceptre, and lawgiver, are here explicatory of each other; and mutually denote, a series of native governors, who should rule the Jewish nation according to its own law. And the sense of the whole is, that Judah should continue a distinct tribe by itself; and that its civil jurisdiction should, under some form or other, and with a greater or less degree of authority, remain in Jewish hands, until the Incarnation of God the Son: but that, He being come, the Jews should, soon after, lose their intrinsic power and authority, as a nation; cease to be governed, by rulers of their own; be ultimately dispossessed of the land, in which they had so long dwelt; and subjected to the dominion of the Gentiles, among whom they should be dispersed, and sifted as in a sieve, over the whole earth. Every tittle of which came, accordingly to pass.

On this illustrious prophecy, uttered almost eighteen hundred years before the birth of Christ, profane history may be considered as the best commentary. We there find, that the sceptre did (not actually depart, but) begin to depart from Judah,

or verge towards a departure, within little more than half a century prior to our Lord's Nativity, when Jerusalem was besieged and taken by Pompey; and Aristobulus II. then king of Judea, was sent prisoner to Rome.

As the manifestation of God in human flesh drew nearer, the symptoms of the departing sceptre grew still more visible. The successive expeditions of Gabinius, of Crassus, and of Cassius, against this devoted people, contributed to prepare the way for the fulfilment of Jacob's prediction: and, in fact, proclaimed, that Shiloh would soon appear.

The sceptre, however, was not hitherto departed from Judah: their civil power and independency, though checked, were not extinguished. They were still governed by magistrates of their own; and were even treated, on various occasions, not as dependants, but as friends and allies of the Roman state.

A few years lower, when Herod (flatteringly surnamed the Great), a native of Edom, was appointed Tetrarch (and soon after king) of Judea, chiefly by his interest with Mark Antony; the prophecy drew nearer to its accomplishment. But though the throne was now for the first time, filled by a foreigner; still, that foreigner was a professor of Judaism. Herod revered, or at least affected to revere, the Mosaic institutions; and even rebuilt the temple at a vast expence. The subordinate magistry, also, consisted of Jews; as did the sanhedrim, which was their highest court of judicature. The sceptre, therefore, though departing fast, was not entirely gone from Judah, ere Shiloh came. Christ was born, towards the close of this Herod's reign: i. e. while the political and ecclesiastical constitution of Judea were subsisting. Herod, indeed, was in some sense tributary to the Roman

empire: but the Jews themselves were, for the most part, in full possession of their civil and religious rights.

When our blessed Saviour was about twelve years of age, the sceptre totally departed from Judah. For, Herod (who died while our Lord was yet an infant) was succeeded by his son Archelaus; which Archelaus, after reigning about ten years, was deposed and banished by the emperor Augustus.—— From thenceforward, the tribe of Judah, which had so long been distinguished by its dignity and preeminence, was reduced to a Roman province, and became an appendage to the empire. Quirinius, prefect of Syria, was commissioned to take possession of the country, in the emperor's name; and Coponius, a Roman knight, was sent to preside over it, as lieutenant governor.

Thus did the sceptre, at length, depart from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet. Augustus drove the nail to the head; and Titus clinched it, within forty years after our Lord's crucifixion; when the city and temple were utterly destroyed, and those of the Jews, who escaped immediate death, were sold for slaves into every part of the known world.

In this manner, does divine providence give completion to its eternal and immutable purposes. All the predicted events that ever came to pass, and this among the rest, are so many standing proofs of God's predestination and foreknowledge. Necessity is but another name for certainty of event; without which, there could be no such thing as infallible foreknowledge, and without infallible foreknowledge, there could be no such thing as infallible prophecy.

Such exact and wonderful accomplishments prove also the divine original of the scriptures. Most of the leading incidents, whether civil or sacred, of general importance either to the church or to the world, were foretold in the Bible. The four universal mo-

narchies, for instance; the advent, the sufferings, the resurrection, and the ascension, of the Messiah; the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost; the abolition of the Levitical œconomy; the ruin and dispersion of the Jews; the calling of the Gentiles; the ten general persecutions; the vast spread of Christianity through the Roman empire; the rise, progress, and continuance of Popery, and of Mahometism; with a multitude of great events beside, were circumstantially foretold in the sacred writings of the Old and New Testament. From hence results such an invincible demonstration of the truth of Christianity, as all the infidels in the world will never be able to surmount, while the sun and moon endure. We ourselves know and see, that many of the scripture prophecies have been completely fulfilled; and that others of them are now fulfilling, even at this very time. Thus, with regard to the Jews, we have all the evidence it is possible to have, that the prophet Hosea wrote by divine inspiration, when he affirmed (chap. iii. 4.), that the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. This has actually, and literally, been the case with them, for rather more than 1700 years past; and continues to be so, at this present moment. Every Jew we meet, is a living proof, that the sceptre is indeed departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet.

It is certain, therefore, that the promised Shiloh is come; and Jesus Christ the righteous, in whose childhood the sceptre departed, is both the Son of the Most High God, and likewise the true Messiah, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write.

שילה, Shiloh, may be rendered the Son; also the Saviour; likewise, the peaceable, and the prosperous one. The Septuagint translates, or rather paraphrases it, by ᾧ τα ἀποκείμενα, i. e. he for whom [all]

things are laid up, or kept in store. In this adorable person, and most wonderful offices and transactions, Jesus exhausts every one of those significations. He is, 1. The everlasting Son of the Father, as God; and the Son of Mary, as man.—2. He is the effectual, the only, and the certain Saviour, i. e. deliverer and preserver, of his elect body, the church. —3. He is the alone peace-maker between God and men, by the infinitely precious blood of his cross. —4. He prospered and prevailed, to the uttermost, in the whole and in every branch of his mediatorial undertaking. No part of his success, as a Saviour, is uncertain, or suspended on a peradventure. The reward of his humiliation lies in the absolute and infallible salvation of every individual sinner for whom he died. And, as his work was perfect, his reward is sure.—5. For him, all things are reserved. He is the appointed heir of all things; the Omega, or central end, no less than the Alpha, or author, of the worlds. All beings are by him, and for him. The elect, both angels and men, stoop to the sceptre of his grace; and the reprobate, both diabolic and human, must submit to the rod of his power.

To him shall the gathering of the people be. It is plain, from this clause of the text before us, that redemption by Christ is not that random and precarious thing, which the Arminian scheme pretends. The salvation he wrought, does not lie at sixes and sevens. It is, by no means, unsettled, uncertain, or undetermined. The dignity of his divine person, the infinite value of his obedience and sacrifice, together with the justice of his Almighty Father to whom the inestimable price was paid, render it impossible that any single soul should perish, for whom such a Redeemer died. It is neither at the option, nor in the power, of thy corrupt free-will, to render his mediation effectual or ineffectual. All is firmly fixed by the unalterable will, the immoveable de-

cree, and the everlasting covenant, of the uncreated Three. Christ did not come into the world at haphazard, nor live and die for a may be. He was born, and shed his blood, for a peculiar people, whom his own sanctifying grace was to make zealous of good works; Titus ii. 14. and that he might gather together into one glorified company, all the children of God that were scattered abroad, John xi. 52.

The elect world are the great all, for whom he lived and bled: even the whole world of his predestinated people. And every one of these his people, shall be gathered to him: to him shall the gathering of the people be. As surely as they were created by his power; so surely shall they, in conversion, be gathered to him, by the efficacious grace of his holy Spirit. As surely as Christ was born for them, at Bethlehem; so surely shall he be formed in them, their hope of glory, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Ghost.

And indeed were not this the case, the whole of Jacob's prophecy would not be true. The text positively avers, that the people (i. e. the elect people of God) shall be gathered to Christ. And, if free grace say, ay; it is in vain for free-will to say, no. God hath said, The people shall be gathered: and faith echoes back the promise, with "Then gathered the people shall be; for thy counsel must stand, and thou wilt do all thy pleasure." Happy it is for us, that God hath taken upon himself, to gather and convert us to his Son. Unless he was the gatherer, not one of us would ever be gathered. Free-will never yet led a sinner to Christ; and never will, while the world remains. We are free enough, to depart from God and holiness; but we are not free and desirous to return to him, and forsake our sins, and be conformed to him in righteousness, until his

grace make us free in the day of his power upon our hearts. Free-will has led millions and millions of souls to the place of torment, but it never lifted a single soul to heaven. All the sins that ever were committed, were committed by free-will: but it is only the transforming grace of God, that inspires and adorns us with the mind that was in Christ.

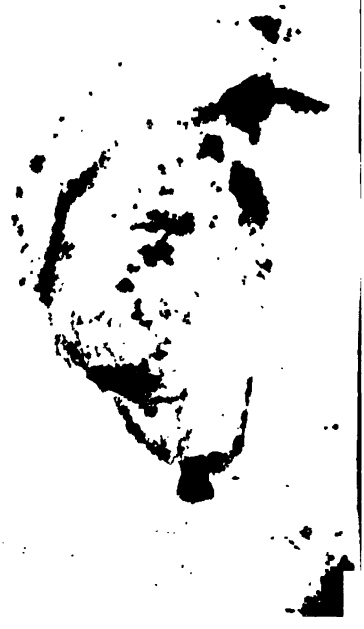
You, therefore, who profess to believe in Jesus, as the Shiloh that was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary, beg of God, that he may not permit you to rest satisfied with a mere speculative assent to the gospel history. If we are saved in the next life, we must be gathered to Christ in this. Nothing short of the inward, effectual call, can stamp us Christians in deed and in truth. Nothing will make us lead holy lives on earth, but an experience of the life and power of grace in our souls. Nor will any thing short of Jacob's faith, make us face death with Jacob's comfort.

And what is death to those that are born of God? It is but another gathering of them unto Christ. The soul of a saint is gathered from the body, as a flower from the stalk; to adorn the court of heaven, and to bloom for ever in the bosom of God. They who are gathered to him by grace, are, at death, only gathered into glory.

Their bodies, too, shall be gathered from the grave, and rescued from the dominion of death; when Shiloh comes, the second time, to renew the face of the earth, and to begin his millennial reign. He, whose voice is as the sound of many waters, will say to his angels, when he appears in the clouds of heaven, Gather my saints together unto me, who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice: who died, trusting in my righteousness, and depending on the merit of my blood, which I shed for the remission of their sins, when I offered myself up in sacrifice on the cross.

To him, in some sense, shall all flesh come. Before him shall be gathered all nations, and at his tribunal shall every knee bow. Thus, in every signification of the term, to him shall the gathering of the people be: and he will sever them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats; and set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left.

Eternal Spirit of grace, gather us here to him, by the energy of thy renewing power! so, at death, shall our souls be gathered into heaven: and our mortal bodies shall be sown in the grave, only to be ripened and refined, until the resurrection of the just.



# A MEDITATION.

As the opening of the present year has recalled a train of reflections, which have not been wholly useless to myself, I transmit the substance of them to the press (*a*); at the same time, breathing up my earnest wishes to the great Sovereign of eternity and Author of time, in behalf of my readers, and of myself, that, together with a new year, he would be graciously pleased to give us new hearts, and enable us to lead new lives; renew and brighten our experiences and our evidences; give us new hold on the everlasting covenant; and write the law of faith and obedience, by the finger of his Spirit, on our inmost souls, more deeply, more feelingly, more comfortably, and more visibly than ever. So shall we rise into an increasing meetness for that state of glory, where the distributions of duration are not measured and regulated by a created sun; but Jesus, the uncreated and eternal sun of righteousness, shines, and will for ever shine, on the whole choir of his glorifying and glorified people.—Phosphore, redde diem!

A considerable part of the following meditation refers to the doctrine of the millennium: a doctrine which many excellent persons are inclined to disapprove. It may be proper to assure these, that as much as relates to that article, is inserted, not with a view to offend, or to perplex the mind of any man; much less, with an intention to obtrude my own private opinion upon other people, or even to proselyte a single reader to the

(*a*) Originally inserted in a periodical publication—EDITOR.

belief of it: least of all, with a desire to raise any controversy about it. But, as the question is naturally connected with the present occasion, I could not have done justice to the subject, without touching on that string: and I have endeavoured to touch it as concisely, as tenderly, and as inoffensively, as I was able. If I have erred, I hope I shall not displease: for which, I throw myself on the public candour.

Jan. 1, 1775.
Lord's-day Evening.

# A MEDITATION

FOR

# NEW-YEAR'S DAY:

SUGGESTED BY SOME REMARKABLE PASSAGES IN THE XXIst CHAPTER OF REVELATION; PARTICULARLY BY THAT WHICH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS:

*He that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new.*

GREAT, unspeakably great, are the Mediator's power and glory. He will eminently display them both, at that blessed, that most desirable period, when he shall be manifested, a second time, at the end of the world; and appear, not as at first, to suffer and die, but to reign on earth, with his saints, prelusive to their final glorification in heaven.

Every thing below, is changeable. The expiration of one year, and the birth of another; the successions of the several seasons, and the regular vicissitudes of day and night; all conspire to remind us, how transitory, how various, and how uncertain, our time is; and unite, in calling upon us to look beyond the present valley, through which we travel, to the mount of God, the habitation of angels, and the saints' eternal home.

As the things of this world are thus liable to perpetual mutation, so are its best blessings mingled, even for the time being, with their respective inconveniences. Imperfection is written, not only on all we are, and on all we do; but, likewise, on all we enjoy. This has been invariably the case, ever

since man fell in paradise. With perfect innocence, perfect happiness took her flight: nor will either of them be seen on earth again, until that distinguished time arrive, when he that sitteth upon the throne, shall say, Behold, I make all things new.

The whole frame, even of material nature, deviated into disorder, from the moment Adam sinned. The elements acquired a propensity to hurt, unknown before. The earth teemed with thorns, and refused to supply its fallen master with food convenient for him, but on condition of labour and toil. Water and fire, though, in themselves, two of the most important sublunary gifts received, nevertheless, a power to injure and destroy. The very air we breathe is frequently the region of disease, and the vehicle of death.

If such be the present state of the material world, how much less pleasing is the visible state of the moral world! But I willingly draw the curtain, before a scene, which, on a superficial view of things, seems rather calculated to excite our concern, than joy. Both scripture, philosophy, and reason, concur in assuring us, that the all-wise God, by whose permission every event comes to pass, must have the justest causes, both for the good he does, and for the evil he permits.

It is enough for us to know, that a day will dawn, when a period shall be put to every disorder, under which nature, at present labours; and that the earth will become just what it was (perhaps considerably better than it was) ere sin destroyed the harmony, and broke the balance of the well-according system. The stupendous accomplishment of this predestined (*a*) restoration is largely and explicitly

(*a*) For farther satisfaction on this subject, if the reader is disposed to consider it, he may consult the 3d vol. of the present bishop of Bristol's Dissertation on the Prophecies: wherein the scripture doctrine of the Millennium is judiciously cleared, rationally stated, solidly proved, and ably vindicated.

foretold, Rev. xx. where we read, that the apostate angels shall be restrained by the coercive power of God, and confined to their own place, for 1000 years. That those of mankind, who belong to Christ; and especially such of them as have been, or are yet to be, slain for his name's sake, shall reign with him upon earth, during that given period. And that the bodies of the reprobate dead shall not be raised, until that period is fully expired.

The next chapter opens with acquainting us, that, prior to the actual commencement of the millennium, a new heaven, i. e. a new body of surrounding air, and a new earth, shall be prepared for the residence of Christ and the elect. I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Intimating, that this terraqueous globe, and its circumambient atmosphere, will be so purified by the preceding general conflagration, as to be totally changed in their qualities, and entirely divested of every thing noxious, or that can cause disgust and pain. And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. By the holy city, I understand, the departed souls of the elect; which had all been received into glory, from the moment of their dismission from the body. These are termed holy, because of their separation unto God, by the decree of election; and because of their complete sanctification by the Spirit of grace. They are a city, because of their multitude, dignity, splendor, and unity with each other. These, when Christ appears, shall come down with him, from God out of heaven; in order to be reunited to their respective bodies, which will then be raised by the voice of the archangel, and by the trump of God. Their beatified souls, thus descending, will be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband: clothed with perfection of grace, and ra-

diant in the robes of immortality and glory; suitable to the state of those, who are to reign with Christ, as kings and priests to the Father. Those of the elect, who shall be found alive on earth at Christ's appearing, will be changed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. xv.); i. e. their souls will be instantaneously perfected in grace, and their bodies immortalized; and thus will they render the church of the first-born complete, and be caught up to meet the Lord, and their glorified brethren, in the air (1 Thess. iv.)

And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Thus will angels and saints shout in concert. And let me observe by the way, that it is impossible for the utmost power of language to express the Deity of Christ, in terms more strong, explicit, and decisive. The tabernacle of God is with men, and God himself [i. e. Christ, in his own proper and individual person] shall be with them, and be their God. With what eyes does an Arian, or a Socinian, read the scriptures?

The felicity of the millenniary state is next described: 1. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. The world, as it now is, is a valley of tears; and even God's own people have their weeping days below. But, in the renewed world, wherein righteousness shall dwell (2 Pet. iii.), no sigh shall heave the breast, no pang shall rend the heart, no tear shall stain the cheek.—2. And there shall be no more death. Each saint will possess personal immortality. We shall never die, ourselves; nor be robbed by death, of our Christian friends.—3. Neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain of body or mind.—For, 4. the former things are passed away: all possible occasions of distress and uneasiness being for ever, and totally removed; the

blessed inhabitants of the new earth will be crowned with unmixed honour, holiness, and joy.

The sacred penman assigns a cause, adequate to these great effects. And He, that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. It will be a new formation indeed. Dr. Watts paraphrases the passage with great beauty and justness, in those admired lines:

> " Attend, while God's Eternal Son
> Doth his own glory shew!
> Behold, I sit upon my throne,
> Creating all things new.
> Nature and sin are past away,
> And the old Adam dies:
> My hands a new foundation lay:
> See a new world arise!"

On what throne does the adored Immanuel sit?—On the throne of nature: for without him was not any thing made that is made.—On the throne of providence: for all things are upheld by the word of his power, and governed by the counsel of his will.—On the throne of grace, as Mediator of the covenant; and as the Saviour of all who recline on his blood and righteousness.—On the throne of his converted people's hearts: inspiring them with good, and restraining them from evil; sanctifying them by his presence, and cheering them with the smiles of his love:—He will occupy the millennial throne; as head of all principality and power.—He will also sit on the throne of universal judgment: assigning the heavenly inheritance to the saints on his right hand; and denouncing the sentence of condemnation against the unholy, on his left.—He will, for ever and for ever, sit on the throne of glory; encompassed by the angels he created, and by the people he redeemed. A cross was once his humble throne; and his crown was a diadem of thorns. A reed once served him for a mock sceptre; and insult-

ing ridicule was the homage he received. But his humiliation ended, when he rose from the dead. He is sat down at the Father's right hand: and, though a lamb (for he still wears the human nature in which he was sacrificed for our salvation), is in the midst of the throne, and the immortal inheritor of endless honour, and glory, and blessing.

Reader, dost thou say within thyself? "Happy the people, who are washed in the blood of him that sitteth upon the throne, and are arrayed in the righteousness of him that maketh all things new!" I can give you one sign, whereby to know, whether this happiness is evidentially yours. Has Christ, by the power of his Spirit, made thy soul anew? Has he begun to introduce his new creation there? God forbid that we should enter upon a new year, without seriously inquiring, Whether he, who maketh all things new, has given us a new nature and a new name. You may read the character of those, who shall be excluded from the New Jerusalem state, in the chapter which has supplied us with the above remarks. The fearful, who deny Christ, or his truths, from worldly motives; and the unbelieving, who depend on their own repentance in the room of Christ's blood, and on their own works, in the room of, or conjointly with, Christ's righteousness; and the abominable, i. e. in general, all who are grossly and daringly immoral; more particularly, murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

In like manner spake Isaiah, many centuries before, in his xxxvth chapter; where, referring to the millenniary dispensation, he thus proceeds: The unclean shall not pass over it; no sinner, that is unjustified and unsanctified, shall have any share in the blessings of that holy state: No lion shall be there; no unregenerate person, none who is a stranger to

the meekness and gentleness of Christ: nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon: no man, in his natural state, no avaricious harpies, or sensualized worldlings, who die unchanged by grace, shall participate in the first resurrection, or attain to the glory which is reserved for the sons of God; but the redeemed shall walk there; the redeemed from sin, who are ransomed by the atonement, and made holy by the Spirit of Christ.

What shall I say farther, to the reader? Shall I wish him joy of the new year, into which the good hand of providence has brought us? I do: and, chiefly, I wish him to be a partaker of that joy, which cometh from above. I wish as the apostle did, that the God of hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing, and cause you to abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. If thou art already a believer, the Lord crown the new year with his goodness, by giving thee a fresh outpouring of faith, holiness, and liveliness!—If you are not a believer, God confer on you the best new-year's gift, by granting you to experience the new birth unto faith and good works! What will become of you, if you die without that experience learned from Christ's own mouth? He, who sitteth upon the throne; he, who maketh all things new; has, himself, most solemnly and irrevocably averred, that, unless you are made anew, unless you are born again of the Holy Ghost, you shall not so much as see, much less inherit, the kingdom of God.

O, pray to him for faith; and he, who prepares your heart to call upon him, will hearken to your cry. Throw yourself, for eternal life, on the merits of Jesus; and then, whether you believe the doctrine of the millennium, or not, you will certainly have a part in the blessedness of the state itself, and the second death shall have no power over you.

A

# DESCRIPTION OF ANTINOMIANISM.

ROM. vii. 22.

*For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.*

STRICTLY speaking, an Antinomian is one, who is "an enemy to the revealed law of God," which is two-fold; moral and ceremonial. Our obligation to observe the ceremonial law was superseded by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ. The Sun of righteousness himself being risen, the ritual stars, which pre-typified his approach, were thrown into shades never to appear again, except descriptively and historically in the records of the Old Testament. Hence it was prophesied concerning Christ, that he should "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," Dan. ix. 27. And St. Paul declares, that "the hand-writing of the Levitical ordinances is blotted out," Col. ii. 14. yea, that it is "abolished, 2 Cor. iii. 13. and disannulled, because of the weakness and [ανωφελος] uselessness thereof," Heb. vii. 18. Even while the Jewish dispensation obtained, the ceremonial law was always intrinsically weak, as not being able (nor indeed was it ever designed) to make the comers thereunto perfect, or to be a real expiation of sin, Heb. x. 1. 4. All its value and virtue consisted in its prefiguring the person by whom, and shadowing forth the way, in which sin is expiated, and sinners saved. Thus these emblematic services were at best weak, though extremely significant in

their import, and for the time being enjoined by the authority of God. But ever since the Messiah's actual sacrifice of himself, they are likewise become useless, in point of practical observance. The end of their institution is completely answered, and we are become dead to the Aaronic law in particular by the body of Christ, Rom. vii. 4. The question, therefore, now depending, has no kind of reference to the ceremonial appointments under the old administration, since it is universally agreed that a man may assert the total disuse of these, and yet be no Antinomian, according to the proper sense of that term.

Men are or are not, to be styled Antinomians, with relation to the moral law: consequently the general definition given above may be reduced to a yet narrower compass; and the term Antinomian will be found strictly to import, one who is an enemy to the moral law of God, revealed in the holy scriptures; and this Antinomianism, or enmity to the moral law, may be distinguished into speculative and practical.

1. Speculative Antinomianism is predicable of any man, and of every man, whose scheme of religious principles is such, as either directly, or by unavoidable consequence, tends to set aside the necessity of personal and social morality.

2. Practical Antinomianism is the habitual, allowed, and persevering violation of those precepts, which God hath prescribed for the adjustment of our outward conduct; whether those rules regard our demeanour toward him, toward our neighbour, or toward ourselves. Let a person's ideas be ever so orthodox, yet, if his life be immoral, he is, to all intents and purposes, a practical Antinomian, and unless the effectual grace of the holy Spirit intervene, to retrieve him from the dominion of his sins, he must after death be one of those, to whom

Christ will say, "Depart from me; I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity."

It evidently appears, from this plain state of the case, that no true believer can possibly be an Antinomian.—He cannot be speculatively such, for "he delights in the law of God after the inner man." Rom. vii. 22. and holds with St. Paul, that he 1 Cor. ix. 21. is not without law to God, but actually ἔννομος, within the dominion, and subject to the preceptive authority of the moral law unto Christ; from principles of faith and love, and from a desire to glorify God and benefit his neighbour.—Much less can the true believer be a practical Antinomian. What we love we follow: "trahit sua quemque voluptas." He that loves the law of God, will aim at conformity to that law; for "how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom. vi. 2. yet it does not follow from this text, that God's converted people are sinners. They are, indeed, said to be dead to sin. But there is a total death, and a partial death. We experience the latter from the first moment of our regeneration. We shall not experience the former till mortality is swallowed up of life. "The spirits of just men are not made perfect in holiness till they ascend from the body to join the innumerable company of angels" that surround the throne, Heb. xii.

We shall now set down some of the reasons why no true believer can be a practical Antinomian, which are, first, one who truly believes, must antecedently to that faith have been spiritually "born of God;" and he that is born of God will do the works of God. "They that are after the flesh," who are in a state of nature and unregeneracy, do mind and follow "the things of the flesh;" but "they that are after the Spirit," who have been renewed by his effectual influence, cannot fail to mind and follow "the things of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 5. Where the Holy Ghost dwells, his gracious

fruits will infallibly and necessarily appear; and the fruit of the Spirit, the practical effect of his saving operation on the heart, is manifested in and by "all goodness and righteousness, and truth," Eph. v. 9. The regenerate elect are the peculiar workmanship of God, "created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath foreordained that they should walk in, Eph. ii. 10. As, therefore, God's foreordination cannot be rendered void, and as the new-creating agency of his Spirit, by which faith is wrought, cannot but lead to holiness of life, it follows, that no true believer can be a practical Antinomian.

Secondly, One who truly believes, must have been convinced of sin: he has so far tasted of the evil and bitterness of iniquity, as to know and feel that sanctification constitutes the intrinsic dignity, and conduces to the supreme felicity of man; consequently, was it only from a principle of self-interest (to go no higher), he cannot but breathe the Psalmist's prayer, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein is my desire," Psalm cxix. And the leading desire of the heart will ever, under such circumstances, influence the conduct of the life.

Thirdly, A true believer has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart," Rom. viii. which more forcibly than even the considerations of dignity and happiness, effectually, but sweetly constrains him to perform the good which his heavenly Father enjoins, and to shun the evil which his heavenly Father forbids. Hence by the apostle "love unfeigned" is connected with "pureness, long-suffering," and "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," 2 Cor. vi. 6, 7. In like manner, faith is expressly declared to "work by love," Gal. v. 6. not by servile dread, but by filial affection. As faith is the seed from whence evangelical morality springs, so love to God is the genial beam that awakens the powers of faith, calls them forth into

act, and adorns the conversation with the leaves and flowers and fruits of pure and undefiled religion. It is the work not of fear, but of faith; it is the labour not of legality, but of love, which indicate our "election of God," 1 Thess. i. 3, 4. Forgive the repetition; for it is a repetition of the apostle's own; it is "the work and labour of love," which God will "not forget," Heb. vi. 10. If he did, he would be unrighteous, i. e. unjust to his own solemn, but absolutely gratuitous promise, whereby real grace, meliorating the heart and shining in the life, stands indissolubly, yet most freely connected with the never-ending happiness of heaven.

It is evident from the above remarks, deduced from clear and express testimonies of inspiration, that love to God (which can only result from a sense of his prior love to us, 1 John iii. 1. and iv. 10. 19.) is the operative, producing principle of acceptable obedience. It is also the producing principle of acceptable sufferings for his sake. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind;" on which remark the apostle rests the following exhortation: "be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, but be partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God," 2 Tim. i. 7, 8. Now, the graces of faith and love being inseparable, it follows, that every true believer is also a lover of Christ. Where this love exists, it is crowned and evidenced by the assemblage both of active and of passive virtues.

Even Dr. Young could sing,

"Talk they of morals?" &c.

And an infinitely superior authority has expressly decided, that "love to God and man, is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 10. i. e. love, when real, will put us on the vigorous and persevering discharge of every moral duty; consequently, as before, no true believer can be a practical Antinomian.

A multitude of additional arguments might be alleged to the same effect, but I shall at present confine myself to the following, viz. That a true believer cannot be a practical Antinomian, because he prizes and wishes to cultivate communion with God, as the sublimest privilege and enjoyment which it is possible to inherit below. But all wilful and allowed deviations from virtue have an innate tendency to interrupt that enjoyment, and to intercept the light of God's countenance; nay, to spread a screen of separation between us and our views of Christ, to darken our evidences, to deaden our joys, and to render the soul a counterpart to Ezekiel's roll, which "was written within and without, with lamentation, and mourning, and woe."

Finally, That person must know little indeed of experimental religion, who can suppose that any pleasures or profits of sin, or all of them together, can compensate for one moment's loss of intercourse with God, as reconciled to us in his dear Son.

# THOUGHTS

ON

## REV. vii. 14, 15.

"*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.*"

THE scripture particularly sets forth these three things, viz. 1. What we are by nature. 2. What we must be made by grace: and, 3. What those, who are possessed of grace, shall be in glory.

St. John had a blessed vision of the latter; of the glory of the saints in light: and of the delightful employ, in which the spirits of just men made perfect, are engaged. Their number exceeded the utmost arithmetic of angels and men: yet are they all minutely numbered by that omniscient Being, who wrote their names in his book; and whose praise they celebrate, in ceaseless songs of adoration, harmony, and love. They stand before the throne, and before the Lamb; clothed with white robes, and palms of immortal victory in their hands.

Do we ask, "Who are these, that are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? An heavenly intelligence will inform us. Pause then, my soul, a moment. Fix thy meditation on the solemnly delightful subject; and may it have a happy tendency to raise thy affections to things above!

1. They came out of great tribulation: εκ της θλιψεως της μεγαλης. The words signify, very grievous oppression, affliction, and trouble, of every kind. The distresses of God's people are various, and flow

from a vast multiplicity of sources. They are tried by the world, outwardly; and, inwardly, by their own corruptions. A believing man's greatest foes are often those of his own house; and, especially, the many evils that are in his own heart. How pathetically did St. Paul complain of the body of sin and death, which he carried about him; and how deeply did he groan, being burdened! The Christian is frequently, like Gideon's men, faint, yet pursuing. God is pleased sometimes to hide his face; then are the souls of his people cast down, and disquieted within them. But a great (perhaps the greater) part of their trouble and distress arises from a consciousness of their own barrenness, ingratitude, and want of fervour in their Redeemer's service; although,

2. They are enabled to wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

By their robes, I presume, we are not here to understand the robe of imputed righteousness, in which they are justified, and stand perfect before God: for that robe does not need washing, being no less than the complete obedience of God incarnate. Their own best duties, services, and religious performances, of any and of every kind, were the robes, in which they visibly appeared before men, and by which their faith was made manifest to the world. For though good works do not procure (so far from it, they have no share in procuring) a believer's justification in the sight of God; yet they follow after the grace of Christ, and are pleasing to God, and profitable to men. So just is that remark of St. Austin: Bona opera non faciunt justum, sed justificatus facit bona opera. This is also agreeable to St. Peter's strain of arguing: 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Moreover, the blood of the Lamb, in which the righteous wash their robes, is and must be a very different thing from the robes themselves. May not this be the simple meaning? "True believers, after all they do and suffer, trust not in their

doings and sufferings, either in whole or in part; but in the atonement made by Immanuel's blood; and in that work of vicarious righteousness, which Immanuel accomplished by his obedience unto death."

3. Their bliss and exaltation are described in these charming words: Therefore are they before the throne of God. Not because they came out of great tribulation; but because they and their robes were washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Being freely interested in Jesus, they are saved by grace; and the God of grace has all the glory.

# CONSIDERATIONS

ON

## HEB. vi. 4, 5, 6.

"*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*"

I HAVE been solicited to give an elucidation of the above-mentioned text: and the rather, because that awful passage may seem, at first view, and in the eyes of a mere English reader, to carry a dubious aspect, as though the faith of God's elect might ultimately fail; and as though God himself might break his covenant, and alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.

It is impossible for those who were [1.] once enlightened, and [2.] have tasted of the heavenly gift, and [3.] were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and [4.] have tasted the good word of God, and [5.] the powers of the world to come; if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance: seeing they (1.) crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and (2.) put him to an open shame.

I. It is said concerning these possible apostates from the Christian profession,

[1.] That "they were once enlightened:" απαξ φωτισθεντας, once (*a*) baptized into the visible church of

(*a*) Eos qui ad baptismum descenderunt: versio Syriac. Παναξ προσεληλυθοτας βαπτισματι. Theodoret.—Vide Millii N. T.

Christ. Every person who is at all acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquity, knows, that βαπτισμος and φωτισμος were, very frequently, put for each other, and used as reciprocal terms. Nor need we observe, that, amongst the classical distinctions, which obtained in the primitive churches, were the following distributions of professors, into these different ranks of church-membership. 1. The κατηχημενοι, or Catechumens; i. e. those adults, who were not deemed sufficiently instructed and matured in the things of God, to be yet admitted to baptism.—2. The πεφωτισμενοι, i. e. enlightened, or baptized; those who had actually been initiated, by their susception of that ordinance.—And, 3. the αγιοι, or τετελεσμενοι, i. e. the perfect; viz. such as had not only been baptized, but who were likewise partakers of all the privileges of God's house, and who were considered as stablished, strengthened, settled in the faith of Christ, and fully entitled to unlimited citizenship in the church below.—It follows, that "they who were once enlightened," or "baptized," might indeed make total and final shipwreck of their profession: and many of them actually did so. They were (as another apostle expresses it) twice dead: i. e. naturally dead, or unregenerate; and professionally dead. According to those words of our Lord, From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have, Luke viii. 18.

[2.] They are described, as having "tasted of the heavenly gift:" or, as having been admitted to a participation of the Lord's Supper.

[3.] They were "partakers of the Holy Ghost:" i. e. of gifts, qualifying them for temporary usefulness in the church, and enabling some of them even to preach the gospel with success. There is, I apprehend, no part of scripture, which forbids us to suppose, that Judas himself might have been, in this sense, a "partaker of the Holy Ghost;" i. e. furnished with ministerial talents, for the benefit of

others. And yet, it is certain, that Judas never was a regenerated man, John vi. 64. and xiii. 10, 11.

[4.] They have "tasted the good word of God:" or had some acquaintance with the scripture, and some relish for its doctrines. To this class, Herod, and Simon Magus, may be referred, Mark vi. 20. Acts vii. 13.

[5.] They shared in "the powers of the world to come." By that phrase, the world to come, αιων ὁ μελλων (which may be better rendered, the future age, or dispensation), the ancient Jews universally meant, the times of the Messiah. And St. Paul, in other parts of this very epistle (the whole of which he particularly designed for the instruction of the Hebrew proselytes), makes use of this same term, and evidently in their own sense of it. Consequently, by the δυναμεις, i. e. "powers, or miracles, of the Messiah's dispensation;" is meant, the ability of working miracles in proof of the gospel.—This ability a man might have, without a grain of saving grace in his heart. St. Paul, elsewhere, supposes it possible for a person to be endued with, what is commonly called, "the faith of miracles;" and yet to be totally void of charity, or real love to God, 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

On those parts of this passage, which we have hitherto considered, the following words of our Lord may stand as the best explanation that can possibly be given. Many will say to me, in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity, Matth. vii. 22, 23. With all their retinue of useful gifts, these possessors of them, were never, themselves, in a state of grace. Christ never knew them, i. e. never loved and never acknowledged them, as true members of that mystic body which he died to save. And, in answer

to every possible instance of professional apostacy, that ever was, and ever can be alleged, the following remark of St. John will always hold true: They went out from us [i. e. they passed, during a time, for true believers], but they were not of us; for, if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us, 1 John ii. 9.

II. The nature of their defection is pointed out. 1. They crucify ἑαυτοις, (*a*) within themselves, the Son of God afresh: i. e. they, as it were, act the crucifixion of Christ over again, in their own minds, and by word of mouth; forasmuch as they inwardly approve, and outwardly justify and applaud, the treatment which Jesus met with. They blasphemously style the Lord of glory an impostor; and make his murder, in some sense, their own act and deed, by horridly thinking, and declaring, that he was deservedly put to death. In so doing, they,

(2.) Put him, so far as in them lies, to open shame.——No wonder that it should be pronounced humanly impossible to renew, or restore again to church-communion, and to repentance, such worse than infernal wretches; to whom, in all probability, is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

(*a*) Vide Millium.

# REMARKS

ON

## Eccl. vii. 16.

*"Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise, why shouldest thou destroy thyself?"*

The carnal Jews, being ignorant of God's righteousness, went about to establish their own: and, from a supposition that they must appear before God in their legal garments, they fasted, prayed, and even scourged themselves, to make their imaginary righteousness more complete. The above austerities being carried on with such rigour, as threatened ultimate injury to the health of the self-righteous ascetics; and Solomon, knowing that bodily exercise, legally performed, would profit them nothing; advised them not to carry their misguided zeal too far, to so little purpose: Be not righteous overmuch.

Moreover, as their wisdom (being from beneath, and contrary to the wisdom of God, which reveals the glorious righteousness of our adorable Saviour) had a strong tendency to make them lose sight of salvation by the Messiah alone, to swell them with self-conceit, and fire their imagination with undue opinion of their own excellence; the sacred writer, thoroughly aware of the tremendous consequences, which must follow on a final persistence in delusion like this, adds, neither make thyself overwise. As if he had said: "By carnal wisdom, ye can never know God. It only makes you more fit for hell. And, whatever others may do, my son, be thou

better instructed; for why shouldst thou destroy thyself, by setting up thy own righteousness in opposition to the merits of Christ; and thy own fancies in opposition to the way of justification planned and revealed by God?"

I doubt not it will be readily allowed, that there is no danger of our being too righteous, in a gospel sense; nor of our having too much of that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation.

# OBSERVATION

ON

## 1 Cor. xv. 28.

*" And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him; that God may be all in all."*

Those words are of unspeakable importance. Much, very much indeed, depends on a right understanding of them. Here let it be observed,

1. That the Son of God, as such, is and must be God, or a person in the divine nature. " Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God," &c.; Heb. i. 8. —" The Son of God was manifested;" is the same with, " God was manifested in the flesh:" 1 John iii. 8. and 1 Tim. iii. 16.—Certain it is, that the eternal Deity, of the second person in the Trinity, results necessarily and solely from his eternal Sonship, or from his having been everlastingly begotten of the Father in the same infinite and undivided essence.

2. The Son of God, as such, cannot possibly be inferior to the Father. There can be no difference, and consequently no inequality of nature, between them. Even among men, a son is as much a human being, as his father: and, surely, the uncreated and eternally begotten Son of the Father Almighty is, and must be, as truly a divine being, as the Father who begat him.

3. We are expressly assured, that the throne of God the Son is for ever and ever, Heb. i. 8. And that, even considering him, not in his divine and essential character, as Son of the Father; but view-

ing him in his human, œconomical, and assumed character, as man and mediator, he shall reign over the house of Jacob [or the elect "church of God] for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Isa. ix. 7. Luke i. 33.

4. It follows, from the above premises, that when we read of a future period, in which the Son also himself shall be subject [ὑποταγήσεται, shall be subordinate, or shall act in subserviency] to the Father; it cannot be understood of him, as man and mediator: for, in those capacities, he did from the first, and to this moment does, act "subjectively, subordinately, and subserviently," to the Father's will and designs, John iv. 30. and vi. 38.

5. Consequently, the future subordination, or subserviency, spoken of in this text, must be some voluntary act of surrender and acknowledgment, which (not the man Christ Jesus, but which) the co-eternal and co-equal Son of God will make to the Father, when the whole number of the elect shall be gathered in.

6. What act of subserviency, or of acknowledgment and surrender, will the Son then make? The apostle tells us: "He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even to the Father." What kingdom? Not his essential royalty, as God with God: for that is inseparable from each of the three divine persons. Nor his presidency over the church, as her head and mediator: for that relation is indissoluble, and he will ever shine as the first-born among many brethren. But I take the kingdom to consist of that innumerable company, whose names were written in heaven; and which, when their numerical fulness is completed, the Son of God, who graciously consented to become the Son of man for their sakes, will present in one entire and glorified body to the Father. Thus God will then be all in all: i. e. the Son will say to the Father, and to the holy Spirit, "Our covenant designs are now completely fulfilled.

I undertook to redeem the elect, and redeem them I did. Thy predestination, O Sovereign Father of mercies, has now its full accomplishment. Thy gracious operations, likewise, O Spirit of holiness, have had their entire effect: who didst engage to renew, sanctify, and preserve the people of my Father's choice, and of my redemption. Here they all stand, washed and clothed by me, and sealed and purified by thee. Not one of them is absent, and not one of our purposes has miscarried in a single instance. Grace reigns through my righteousness, unto eternal life: and we, the triune God, are all in all!"——Amen. Amen.

# EXPLICATION

OF

## ROM. viii. 4.

"*That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*"

THE works of the law, and the righteousness of the law, are synonymous terms. By the former, we are expressly told, no flesh can be justified: nor, consequently, by the latter, as performed by us. Why? Because every man is a fallen creature; and to the corruption of his nature, is hourly adding the accumulated iniquity of actual transgressions. Therefore, by such a partial, imperfect, and polluted conformity to the moral law, no person can possibly be accepted unto life. And yet, without justification, man must be lost for ever. He must, therefore, either give up all hope of salvation, or seek for a justifying righteousness at the hand of Christ. Now Christ came for this very end, to fulfil all righteousness; not for himself, who was and is the source and centre of all holiness; but for us, who had lost our original rectitude, and are become the degenerate plants of a strange vine. The Son of God left his glory, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled for us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. This must certainly be the genuine import of the text under consideration. Ινα το δικαιωμα τε νομε πληρωθη εν ημιν, the exact sense of which, according to the genius of the original, stands thus: "That the righteousness required by the law might be fulfilled for us," i. e. in our stead, or on

our account. Thus Theophylact on the place: ὁ γαρ ὁ νομος εβουλετο μεν, ησθηνει δε, τουτο ὁ Χριστος εποιησε δι' ημας. What the law was desirous of [viz. perfect obedience, in order to justification], but through weakness, could not obtain; that did Christ perform for us. Now to render the preposition εν, by for, instead of in, does not put the least violence upon the words of the apostle. The same preposition signifies for, in many other parts of the sacred writings. For instance, Mat. vi. 7. They think to be heard, εν τη πολυλογια αυτων, for their much speaking.—Gal. i. 24. εδοξαζον εν εμοι τον Θεον, they glorify God for me, i. e. in my behalf, on my account.—Eph. iv. 1. I a prisoner εν Κυριῳ, for the Lord, i. e. on Christ's account, and for the sake of his gospel. And ver. 32. Even as God, εν Χριστῳ, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.—Phil. i. 26. That your rejoicing in Christ Jesus may abound, εν εμοι, for me.—1 Pet. iv. 14. If ye are reproached, εν ονοματι Χριστου, for the name of Christ. More examples might be easily produced, but these may suffice.

Admit this translation of the preposition εν to be just in this place (and I think it is self-evidently so) and there is not, in the whole book of God, a passage wherein the glorious suretyship obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ is more clearly and solidly asserted.

# AN EXPLICATION

OF THAT

# REMARKABLE PASSAGE.

(ROM. ix. 3.)

"*I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.*"

THIS seemingly difficult text is rendered perfectly easy and clear, 1. by inclosing part of it in a parenthesis; and, 2. by attending to the tense of the verb ηυχομην, mistakenly translated, I could wish.

I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart (for I myself, ηυχομην, did wish to be in a state of separation from Christ), on account of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. That is to say, "I am deeply concerned for my unbelieving countrymen: and I the more pity and lament their enmity against Jesus, because I myself was once exactly in their situation; and know, by my own past experience, the bitterness and danger of their infidel state." Something like the speech of Dido, in Virgil:

Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

# AN ILLUSTRATION

CONCERNING

## 1 CORINTH. XV. 29.

*"Else, what shall they do, who are baptized for the dead."*

IT may be remarked on this portion of sacred writ, that superstition, and a too great stress on the mere opus operatum of ordinances, began very early to encroach on the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel. Hence, by degrees, the sacrament of baptism was considered, as inseparably connected with the absolute and plenary forgiveness of sins, from this mistaken idea, many weak believers were for postponing their own baptism, until their last moments. The consequence of which was, that some (through sudden death, or other unforeseen exigencies) actually died, without having been baptized at all. Their surviving relatives, equally superstitious with the deceased, imagined, that, in order to remedy, so far as could be done, the loss of that rite; it would be a deed of charity, for one of them to be baptized in the deceased person's name and stead; begging of God, at the same time, to accept the baptism of the proxy, as though it had been administered to the principal.

If this corrupt practice obtained in some of the first churches so early as the days of St. Paul, (which, however, we will not venture to affirm), the solution of the text in question will be very easy. The apostle, not from any approbation of this superstitious custom, but merely with a view to convince the Corinthians of the certainty of a resurrection, by an argument ad hominem, i. e. by an

argument founded on their own principle and practice; reasons thus: "What shall they do, who are baptized [ὑπερ των νεκρων] for, or "instead of, the dead?" i. e. What can be the design of them, who act in this manner, but to benefit (as they fondly suppose) the persons who died unbaptized? But, if these persons so died, as not to live again, your imaginary labour of love can answer no valuable end whatever. Ye are, therefore, O Corinthians, self-convicted of the grossest absurdity, as many of you as are baptized for your departed friends, and yet doubt the future resurrection of your friends departed.

# EXPLANATION

ON THAT

## DECLARATION OF THE APOSTLE.

### 1 Cor. xv. 5.

Where it is said, that our Lord, after his resurrection, was seen of Cephas, and then of the twelve, it is enquired, "How is this explained? Seeing Judas had put an end to his own existence long before; could he then be called one of the twelve?"

Certainly not. The late Dr. Guyse, in his most valuable paraphrase and notes on the New Testament, has given this matter a very satisfactory explication. "It is no uncommon thing for a society, body, or college of men, to retain their original name, when one or more of them be absent, or dead. Jacob's sons called themselves twelve brethren, after they supposed that Joseph was lost or dead; Gen. xlii. 13. 32. The triumviri, septemviri and decemviri, among the Romans, were respectively so called, whether they were all living, or were present in their assemblies, or not. And we commonly speak of points of law being referred to the twelve judges, though several of them may be absent, and some of them dead. In like manner, Christ having originally appointed twelve apostles, to be in a peculiar manner his witnesses; they were called by that name, after Judas was dead, and before Matthias was chosen in his place to make up the number again; John xx. 24. Yea, and they continued to be spoken of as twelve, after Paul and Barnabas

were added to their number; Rev. xxi. 14.——— Thus far, the excellent Dr. Guyse: correspondently with whose just remarks, it may be further observed, that, if only forty members of parliament assemble, they are termed the house of commons; though the entire number, if all were present, amounts to 558.

A

# SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION

ON

## CANT. viii. 14.

"*Make haste my beloved; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart on the mountains of spices.*"

EVERY serious and sensible Christian considers the book of Canticles as a storehouse of inward religion, and a treasury of holy experiences. In no part of the scriptures is the work of the blessed Spirit, on the souls of men, more strikingly and more exactly delineated. If some unhappy persons consider this sacred poem in any other view, it is because they are unacquainted with the power of godliness, and have not experienced that renewal in the spirit of their minds, which can alone qualify lost sinners to contemplate, with advantage, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

The church addresses the passage quoted above to the Saviour, who has redeemed her by his blood. She styles him, her beloved; the object of her supreme affection, and the meritorious procurer of all her happiness. She prays for the manifestations of his spiritual presence; and that those manifestations may be speedy: "Make haste, my beloved! and be thou," in the swiftness of thy approach, "like to a roe, or to a young hart, on the mountains of spices!" Rapidly as those lively, expeditious animals spring from hill to hill; nimbly as they bound, instantaneously as they leap, on the fragrant mountains of the east; so swiftly do thou lift up the light of thy countenance on thy waiting people, and cheer

them with such tokens of thy grace and favour, as are more reviving to the soul, than all the odours of the spicy mountains are to the fainting traveller. On the other hand, a formal professor does not look upon ordinances as means of inward religion, and as steps to communion with God, through the Spirit: but having skimmed the surface of outward duties, he sits down satisfied with externals, and aims at nothing higher.

Not so are the conduct and views of one, whose heart God hath touched. The truly awakened soul considers all the exterior means of grace but as channels, through which grace itself, and the comforts of it, are (in a way of sovereignty and freeness) communicated to them that hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And as it is not the mere channel of conveyance, but the water conveyed, which can satisfy thirst; so the Christian is sensible, that, not a bare attendance on outward duties, but the presence of God enjoyed under those duties, is that which nourishes the believing soul, and renews the believer's strength. Hence his heart's desire and prayer are similar to the verse immediately preceding the text. "Thou that dwellest in the gardens," thou who condescendest to be constantly present in the hearts and assemblies of thy people, "the companions hearken to thy voice; the church above, and the church below, with whom thou hast vouchsafed to contract a gracious intimacy, are delighted with hearkening to thy voice of love: O cause me to hear it! make me also glad with the joy of thy salvation! give me to see the felicity of thy chosen, and to drink deep of that river, to experience much of that unspeakable fellowship with thyself, which makes glad the city of God both in earth and heaven.". Then follows the supplication, "Make haste, my beloved," &c. with which we began; from all which it appears, that Jesus is the object of his people's love.

And whom should we love, if not him who loved us, and gave himself for us? If the bliss even of angels and glorified souls, consists greatly in seeing, and praising the Son of God; surely, to love, to trust, and to celebrate the friend of sinners, must be a principal ingredient in the happiness of saints not yet made perfect. Solomon, whose experience of grace was lively and triumphant when he wrote this Song of Songs, declares, in the fifth chapter, "that Christ is altogether lovely." Other objects may be overrated, and too highly esteemed; but so transcendent, so infinite is the excellency of Christ, that he is, and will be to all eternity, more lovely than beloved. Yet, though all the love, possible for saints and angels to show, falls, and will always fall, infinitely short of the Saviour's due: still it is a blessed privilege, to love him at all, though in ever so faint a manner, and in ever so low a degree. They that love him at all, wish to love him more: and more and more they shall love him, through the ages endless duration in heaven, where they shall be like him, and see him as he is.

# MEDITATIONS

ON THE

COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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"ALMIGHTY God," &c.—Advent signifies, the act of approaching, or of coming. The members of Christ's mystic body, the church, however they may differ in external and non-essential points; yet, are they all firmly united in this faith, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and, consequently, very God, of very God:—that he came to visit us, in great humility:—that he will come again, in the last day, to judge both the quick and the dead:—and that life immortal is obtained for us, and shall be enjoyed by us, through him only.

These are the doctrines, upon which this collect is founded; and which are confessed in it. In the firm belief of these, looking back to Christ's first coming, and forward to his second advent, every believing soul is and will be concerned, to cast away the works of darkness: i. e. the evil actings of his corrupt nature; a nature compounded of the pride of the devil, and the lust of the beast. And, 2. to put on the whole armour of God, brought to light, and presented to him by the gospel: even the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of Christ's righteousness, the preparation of the gospel, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit (Eph. v. 14, &c.) And seeing the absolute necessity of casting away the former, and of putting on the latter, believers use all prayer, to the God of all grace, for his Spirit, to enable them to do both; knowing, that, without God's effectual grace, they can do neither.

Hence observe, that this collect breathes a spirit, quite contrary, both to Antinomian licentiousness, and to Arminian pride. These are of the works of darkness, enemies to the church of Christ; and are alike, therefore, to be detested and cast off. The former brings a reproach on the purity of the gospel: the latter perverts the gracious glad tidings of it. That we may avoid the one, and cast off the other, let us ever remember, that all good works are necessary to adorn our holy profession; but that, as the church of England elsewhere speaks, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God, by Christ preventing us (or being beforehand with us), that we may have a good will; and working with us, when we have that good will. Article X.

# CONCISE HISTORY

OF THE

APOSTLE'S CREED, THE NICENE CREED, THE ATHANASIAN CREED, AND THE TE DEUM.

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I. THAT excellent and ancient formulary, commonly called the Apostle's Creed, was so named, not as if it were written by those illustrious disciples of Christ, but because it contains a general summary, or outline, of the apostolic doctrines.

Some weak and superstitious people, however, have aimed at reducing it to twelve articles (though it really consists of twenty), in order to have it believed that this creed was drawn up by the twelve apostles, and that each apostle clubbed an article. But let it be observed, (1.) that this tradition was never heard of, so far as appears, for almost four hundred years after Christ. (2.) Rufinus, one of the first asserters of it, is, on all hands, acknowledged to be an author, whose integrity was none of the best. (3.) Neither St. Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles; (4.) nor any of the primitive councils or synods; nor, (5.) any of the more ancient fathers, say one word about the matter: St. Ambrose being the first writer, who ascribed this creed to the apostles, as their composition.

Nevertheless, it is a valuable compendium of the Christian faith; and truly apostolical, though not framed by the apostles. It is quite uncertain, who were the penmen of it, and when it was penned. But this is no impeachment of its worth, respectability, or usefulness. It seems to have obtained in the church, about A. D. 300.

II. The Nicene Creed is a most admirable form of sound words, drawn up by the first general council, convened at Nice, A. D. 325.

This celebrated council, which assembled in the great hall of the emperor Constantine's palace, at Nice, in Bythinia, consisted, at a medium, of about three hundred bishops, and a vast multitude of inferior clergymen. Its grand object was, to counteract the progress of the Arian heresy, then growing rampant: in opposition to which, the creed here framed, asserts the eternal generation of the Son of God, and (which are the necessary consequences of that) his co-essentially and co-equality with the Father. Arius himself, from motives of worldly prudence, subscribed this famous creed; but with most wicked and treacherous mental reservations; just as too many, who enter into orders in the church of England, at this very day, subscribe this very creed, without believing the eternal generation, and the absolute divinity, of God the Son; any more than they believe the doctrine of absolute predestination, to which they likewise most solemnly set their hands.

III. The Athanasian Creed chiefly respects the doctrine of the Trinity; the eternal generation, and the miraculous incarnation, of the second person in the Godhead. It is called, St. Athanasius' Creed; not because it was syllabically composed by him, but because it so perfectly accords with the system which that great and good man drew from the scriptures, and which (at a time when the Arian faction were endeavouring to persecute truth out of the world) he underwent so many dangers, difficulties, and sufferings to defend.

Dr. Waterland, who has professedly written a learned and masterly history of the Athanasian Creed, supposes, with the utmost probability, that it was drawn up by Hilary, bishop of Arles, about A. D. 430.

Archbishop Tillotson expressed an impious wish, "That the church of England was fairly rid of the Athanasian Creed." And why not, by the same rule, wish her to be fairly rid of a certain troublesome volume (no less galling to Arians and Arminians, than the Athanasian Creed and the Thirty-nine Articles can be), viz. that two-edged sword of the Spirit, commonly called the Old and New Testaments?

IV. The seraphic hymn, entitled, Te Deum, seems to have been collected from some devotional passages in the writings of St. Ambrose and of St. Austin. Dr. Cave, however, thinks it probable, that St. Ambrose alone, had the honour of composing this divine and almost unequalled song, by way of general antidote against the Arian poison. St. Ambrose died, A. D. 397. St. Austin not until 430.

# QUERY,

CONCERNING

A PASSAGE IN THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY, STATED AND RESOLVED.

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In what sense are we to understand that declaration of the husband to his bride, "With my body I thee worship?"

The word worship, in ancient English, signifies neither more nor less, than that honour, attention, and respect, which are due to worthship, i. e. to distinguished excellence. The church of England, taking it for granted that a man has a very high opinion of the woman he marries, enjoins him to testify that good opinion; and in such terms, as are equivalent to a solemn promise of treating her tenderly and respectfully: or, as the apostle Peter expresses it, of giving honour to the wife, as to ασθενες ερῳ σκευει, the less robust vessel of the two, 1 Pet. iii. 7.

A late very sensible writer (*a*) supposes, agreeably to the venerable Hooker's comment on the phrase, that the design of the above stipulation is, "To express, that the woman, by virtue of this marriage, has a share in all the titles and honours, which are due or belong to the person of her husband (*b*)." He also observes, that Martin Bucer, who lived at the very time when our liturgy was composed, translated the passage in question, by cum corpore meo te honoro, i. e. "with my body I thee honour:" and that the learned Mr. Selden renders it corpore

(*a*) Viz. Mr. Wheatly, in his Rationale of the Book of Common Prayer, p. 440. Edit. 1722, octavo.

(*b*) See Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. sect. 73.

meo te dignor.—" It is true," adds Mr. Wheatly, " the modern sense of the word is [or, rather, seems] somewhat different: for which reason, at the review of our liturgy, after the restoration of king Charles II. the word worship was promised to be changed for that of honour. How the alteration came to be omitted, I cannot discover. But, so long as the old word is explained in the sense here given, one would think no objection could be urged against the using of it."

A

# CURSORY REVIEW

OF

# VALOUR, PATRIOTISM, AND FRIENDSHIP,

OCCASIONED BY

A LATE CELEBRATED AUTHOR *

EXCLUDING THEM FROM THE LIST OF VIRTUES.

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## VALOUR.

LET what will become of prowess, considered, merely, in a military view, there certainly is a species of it, by no means incompatible either with the letter or spirit of the gospel, but warranted by both. Valour, properly understood, does not consist in cutting throats with insensibility, nor yet in plundering the weak, trampling on the humble, oppressing the innocent, or doing mischief, only because it may be in our power. This is a very unjust definition of the quality in question: true valour is but another word for strength of mind, and is not always constitutional; but sometimes the gift of divine grace, and sometimes the acquired result of reason and reflection. Rash, unjust, and wanton exertions of power differ as much from valour, as insolence and pride differ from real dignity, or as lawless lust differs from virtuous love. Valour, or firmness of soul, may be distinguished in active and passive. The former meets just and ne-

* Soame Jenyns, Esq.

cessary dangers with decent intrepidity, as David encountered the Philistine of Gath. The latter sustains incumbent evils, with fortitude and composure, and its language is that of St. Paul, and of the whole army of martyrs. None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself; I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts xx. 24. and xxi. 13.

"Be strong, and of a good courage," said the Deity to Joshua, "be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed," Josh. i. 9. The promise to obedient Israel was, five of you shall chase an hundred; and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword, Lev. xxvi. 8. It even seems probable, that something analagous to war, was carried on, literally, for a short time, in heaven itself, antecedently to the expulsion of the apostate angels, who can hardly be supposed to have quitted the seats of blessedness, without force on one part, and unavailing resistance on theirs. It moreover deserves remembrance, that it was among our Lord's last directions to his disciples, He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one, Luke xxii. 36. Now, a sword is both an offensive and defensive weapon. The evident purport, therefore, of the injunction is, that emergency may arise, wherein it is lawful for Christians to defend themselves by a resolute resistance, and to annoy their enemies by a vigorous assault.

### PATRIOTISM.

The prophet Jeremiah was a patriot, or most ardent lover of his country, else he would hardly have deplored its calamities, in strains so pathetic as these: For the hurt of the daughters of my people

am I hurt; I am black, astonishment hath taken hold upon me, Jer. viii. 21. A very considerable part of his prophecy, and almost the whole of his book of Lamentations, are the sympathetic complaints of a religious patriot, weeping over the sins, and the distresses of his country. Read the 137th Psalm. What is it, but the warmest effusions of a patriotic muse, glowing (and under the influence of divine inspiration too, glowing I say) with the most exalted and uneradicable love of its country. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her skill in music: if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy, that is, as dearly as I love to join in the public and private worship of God; may my hand never be able to touch the harp to his praise, nor my tongue to sing hymns to the glory of his name; if Judea and her capital are not dearer to me than any other country, and than any other temporal consideration whatever. But what must set the point beyond all farther dispute, is the example of Christ himself. If he was a patriot, patriotism must be a virtue. And, that he was such, appears from his weeping over the approaching calamities of his country; the tears which, as man, he shed on that occasion, were tears of patriotism.

### FRIENDSHIP.

A most tender and peculiar friendship subsisted between Jonathan and David, that Timothy and Philemon were amongst the most intimate and confidential friends of St. Paul, and (what must decisively turn the scale is) that our Lord himself honoured Lazarus and his two sisters, and also the evangelist John, with such a share of his adorable intimacy and friendship, as the rest of his disciples,

much less the world at large, were by no means admitted to. And that the tears he poured at the tomb of Lazarus, were tears of friendship: we should distinguish sufficiently between friendship and benevolence. The latter, according to the amiable genius of Christianity, should extend to all mankind. The former may, without any wrong to others, be lawfully and reasonably restrained to a few.

# ON SACRED POETRY.

GOD is the God of truth, of holiness, and of elegance. Whoever, therefore, has the honour to compose, or to compile, any thing that may constitute a part of his worship, should keep those three particulars constantly in view.

As we cannot pray, without the exciting and enabling grace of the Holy Ghost (Rom. viii. 26. Jude 20.); so neither can we sing, spiritually, acceptably, and profitably, without the presence and inspiration of the same condescending and most adorable person (1 Cor. xiv. 15. Eph. v. 18, 19). The reason is evident. For, what is a psalm, or hymn, strictly taken, but prayer, or praise, in verse?

The original difference (if any specific difference there originally was) between psalms and hymns, seems to have lain in this: that, anciently, a psalm was actually set to instrumental music, and usually accompanied by it at the time of singing (Psal. lxxxi. 2). A similar, or even the self-same composition, simply sung without the aid of musical instruments, was perhaps the primitive definition of an hymn (Matth. xvi. 30). By degrees, the word psalm became appropriated, for respectful distinction's sake, to the inspired songs of David, and others, recorded in scripture: while succeeding pieces, formed on those elevated models, but written, from time to time, as occasion served, by inferior believers, obtained the appellation of hymns.

St. Paul (in Eph. v. 19. and Col. iii. 16.) mentions a species of sacred poetry, which he terms ωδαι πνευμαλικαι, i. e. "spiritual odes." These, like-

wise, I take to have been, what are usually called, human compositions: as much so, as the hymns of Prudentius, Beza, Grotius, Witsius, Vida, Dr. Watts, Miss Steele, or Mr. Hart. Such devout productions may be denominated odes, or songs at large, because (like many of the Psalms themselves) they admit of much latitude and variety: being not strictly limited to absolute prayer and praise, but occasionally fraught with doctrine, exhortation, and instruction in righteousness; tending, as the apostle expresses it in the passage last cited, to "teach," to "admonish," and to build up one another on our most holy faith.—The "odes," which St. Paul recommends, "are termed spiritual" ones, because they relate to spiritual things; are written by spiritual persons, under the impressions of spiritual influence; and, if the good Spirit of God shine upon us at the time, are a most spiritual branch of divine worship: conducing to spiritualize the heart, wing the affections to heaven, and give us a blessed foretaste of the employment and the felicity of elect angels, and of elect souls delivered from the prison of the flesh.

Some worthy persons have been of opinion, (and what absurdity is there, for which some well-meaning people have not contended?) that it is "unlawful to sing human compositions in the house of God." But, by the same rule, it must be equally unlawful to preach, or publicly to pray, except in the very words of scripture. Not to observe, that many of the best and greatest men, that ever lived, have, both in ancient and modern times, been hymn-writers; and that there is the strongest reason to believe, that the best Christians, in all ages, have been hymn-singers. Moreover, the singing of hymns is an ordinance, to which God has repeatedly set the seal of his own presence and power; and which he deigns eminently to bless, at this very day. It has proved a converting ordinance, to some of his people; a recovering ordinance, to others; a comfort-

ing ordinance to them all; and one of the divinest mediums of communion with God, which his gracious benignity has vouchsafed to his church below.

But remember, reader, that "none can," truly and savingly, "learn the song of the Lamb," who are not "redeemed from the earth" by his most precious blood: (Rev. xiv. 3.)—Pray, therefore, for the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost on thy heart, to apply and make known to thee thy personal interest in the Father's election and in the Son's redemption. So wilt thou not only sing with understanding, but with the spirit also beaming upon thy soul; and be able experimentally to say,

As from the lute soft music flows,
  Obedient to the skilful hand;
So, tuned by thee, my spirit owes
  Her harmony to thy command.

Touched by the finger of thy love,
  Sweet melody of praise I bring;
Join the enraptured choirs above,
  And feel the bliss that makes them sing.

# REFLECTIONS

FOR

## THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR 1776.

1. OUR highest acknowledgments are due to him, whose mercy endureth for ever. To him who crowns each revolving year with the blessings of his goodness, who holds our souls in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved. He alone is worthy to receive the love of our hearts, the tribute of our lips, and the obedience of our hands, even to him be praise and dominion for ever. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.

2. If we ought to kindle into gratitude, under the sense of his increasing mercies; it is no less our duty, and our desire, to acknowledge, and deplore, the accumulating sinfulness, which augments with every moment that swells our aggregate of time, who can tell, how oft he offendeth.

3. But if we are great debtors, we have also a still greater pay-master. His infinite atonement has discharged the whole. While therefore we remember, and feel our unworthiness, let it answer every purpose of humiliation, but not cherish the poisonous root of unbelief. Be the free grace of the Father, the redeeming merit of Jesus, and the sanctifying omnipotence of the Holy Ghost, our sovereign preservatives from distrust, the subjects of our song, and the strength of our joy, all through the allotted paths of our earthly pilgrimage.

4. Through the good hand of God upon us, another year dawns on the present generation. Time is now 5779 years old; and hastens to that grand period, when, like a drop that has been severed from the

ocean, it shall again be absorbed in that eternity, out of which it was taken. Amidst the omnium rerum vicissitudines, or the incessant changes, incident to men and things, previous to the final death of time; we rejoice, that the Saviour of sinners and the blessings of his cross, continue immutably the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Not less than 800 years before his incarnation, he thus addressed his believing people, by the mouth of his sublimest prophet, Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath! For the heavens shall vanish away, like smoke; and the earth shall wax old, like a garment; and they that dwell therein, shall die in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished, Isa. li. 6. A sheet anchor, in every possible storm!

5. What numbers were transmitted to their eternal homes in the course of the year now closed!

"How many sleep, who kept the world awake
With lustre and with noise! Has death proclaim'd
A truce, and hung his sated lance on high?
'Tis brandish'd still, nor shall the present year
Be more tenacious of her human leaves,
Or spread of feeble life a thinner fall."

Many a lofty head will be laid low before the expiration of 1776. The sad ravages of civil war will, too probably, people the regions of the grave with additional thousands, over and above the myriads, who never fail to swell the ordinary bills of mortality.—But providence, unerring providence, governs all events, Dan. iv. 35. And grace, unchangeable grace, is faithful to its purpose, Rom. viii. 28. May we live by faith on both.

# THOUGHTS

ON

# THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

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THE deep things, which relate to personal experience of the holy Spirit's dealing with the soul, ought to be matters of prayer, not of disputation.

It has long been a settled point with me, that the scriptures make a wide distinction, between faith, the assurance of faith, and the full assurance of faith.

1. Faith is the hand, by which we embrace, or touch, or reach toward, the garment of Christ's righteousness, for our own justification.—Such a soul is, undoubtedly, safe.

2. Assurance I consider as the ring, which God puts upon faith's finger.—Such a soul is not only safe, but also comfortable, and happy.

Nevertheless, as a finger may exist, without wearing a ring; so faith may be real, without the superadded gift of assurance. We must either admit this, or set down the late excellent Mr. Hervey (among a multitude of others) for an unbeliever. No man perhaps ever contended more earnestly, for the doctrine of assurance, than he; and yet, I find him expressly declaring as follows: "What I wrote concerning a firm faith in God's most precious promises, and an humble trust that we are the objects of his tender love; is what I desire to feel, rather than what I actually experience." The truth is, as another good man expresses it, "A weak hand may tie the marriage-

knot: and a feeble faith may lay hold on a strong Christ.

Moreover: assurance, after it has been vouchsafed to the soul, may be lost. Peter, no doubt, lost his assurance, and sinned it away, when he denied Christ. He did not, however, lose the principle of faith; for Christ had beforehand, prayed, concerning him, that his faith itself might not fail: and Christ could not possibly pray in vain.—A wife may lose her wedding-ring. But that does not dissolve her marriage relation. She continues a lawful wife still. And yet, she is not easy, until she find her ring again.

3. Full assurance I consider as the brilliant, or cluster of brilliants, which adorns the ring, and renders it incomparably more beautiful and valuable. Where the diamond of full assurance is thus set in the gold of faith, it diffuses its rays of love, joy, peace, and holiness, with a lustre which leaves no room for doubt or darkness.—While these high and unclouded consolations remain, the believer's felicity is only inferior to that of angels, or of saints made perfect above.

4. After all, I apprehend that the very essence of assurance lies in communion with God. While we feel the sweetness of his inward presence, we cannot doubt of our interest in his tender mercies. So long as the Lord speaks comfortably to our hearts, our affections are on fire, our views are clear, and our faces shine. It is when we come down from the mount, and when we mix with the world again, that we are in danger of losing that precious sense of his love, which is the strength of saints militant, and the joy of souls triumphant.

But let not trembling believers forget, that faith, strictly so called, is neither more nor less than a receiving of Christ, for ourselves in particular, as our only possible propitiation, righteousness, and Saviour, John i. 12.—Hast thou so received Christ? Thou

art a believer, to all the purposes of safety.—And it deserves special notice, that our Lord calls the centurion's faith, "great faith;" though it rose no higher than to make him say, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Mat. viii. 8. 10.

The case likewise, of the Canaanitish woman is full to the present point. Her cry was, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" And, a little after, "Lord, help me!" Jesus, at first, gave her a seeming repulse: but her importunity continued; and she requested only the privilege of a dog, viz. to eat of the crumbs which fell from the master's table. What were our Saviour's answer, and our Saviour's remark? An answer and a remark, which ought to make every broken sinner take down his harp from the willows:——"O woman, great is thy faith." Matt. x. 22—28.

5. The graces, which the blessed Spirit implants in our hearts (and the grace of faith, among the rest), resemble a sun-dial; which is of little service, except when the sun shines upon it. The Holy Ghost must shine upon the graces he has given, or they will leave us at a loss (in point of spiritual comfort), and be unable to tell us whereabouts we are. May he, day by day, rise upon our souls, with healing in his beams! Then shall we be filled with all joy and peace in believing, and abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. xv. 13.

6. Are there any weak in faith, who come under the denomination of bruised reeds, and smoking flax? Let them know, that God will take care of them. The former will not be broken: the latter shall not be quenched. Bless God, for any degree of faith; even though it be as the smallest of all seeds, sooner or later, it will surely expand into a large and fruitful tree.—However, stop not here; but,

as the apostle advises, covet earnestly the best gifts: and the gift of assurance, yea, of fullest assurance, among the rest. The stronger you are in faith, the more glory will you give to God, both in lip and life. Lord, increase our faith! Amen.

# SPEECH,

DELIVERED

AT THE QUEEN'S ARMS, NEWGATE-STREET,

ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

"*Whether the world is to be destroyed, and what are the approaching symptoms of its dissolution?*"

Mr. PRESIDENT,

WHEN this question was debated at a former meeting, an ingenious gentleman then present observed, very truly, that the decision of it in this assembly, depends entirely on the principles of the respective speakers. Every person here, either believes revelation, or not. Those who, unhappily, reject that divine light, cannot possibly come to any degree of certainty, as to the enquiry, now depending: to them, there is a wide field left open, of conjecture ad infinitum: they may, to their lives end, blunder on in the dark; and debate how the world is to be destroyed, whether by water, an universal earthquake, &c. or even whether it will ever be destroyed at all. But to them who believe the scripture, the point is quite plain and clear. The Bible cuts short the matter at once, and leaves no room for doubt. We are there positively told, that the terraqueous globe will be destroyed, and destroyed by fire. "The earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up:" and again, "the heavens and the earth, which now are, are kept in store, and reserved unto fire:" meaning the globe on which we live, and the atmosphere that surrounds it equally every way. These, the same inestimable book in-

forms us, will not be so destroyed, as to be either annihilated, or rendered unfit for subsequent habitation: but so destroyed, as to rise (like the fabled phœnix) from its ashes, and become eventually such as it was at its first creation, before moral evil entered, and ever natural evil took place. As to the manner in which this great event is to be effected, revelation, so far as I can perceive, has not discovered. Whether it will be by God's omnipotently counteracting the centrifugal power of the earth, by which it is at present kept at a due distance from the sun; or by the fall of one or more of the heavenly bodies, which may kindle the earth in their passage; or by the approximation of a comet; or, which seems most probable to me, by the bursting forth of the subterraneous fire, which is justly believed to be imprisoned within the cavities of the earth, near the centre, and which is supposed to act in concert with the sun-beams in temperating the coldness of the air, and occasioning the fruitfulness of the earth; but which probably continues, insensibly, to increase with time, and will at the destined season, burst the womb in which it is confined, and render the whole earth and sea one undistinguished mass of fluid fire.

I come now to the other branch of the question, respecting the approaching symptoms, which will precede this general dissolution. As to those recorded in the xxivth of St. Matthew, and in the xxist of St. Luke, the signs, prelusive to the destruction of Jerusalem, are so blended and interwoven with those that shall introduce Christ's second coming; and it requires so large an induction of historical particulars, as well as so much caution and critical exactness to assign each circumstance to its respective period of accomplishment; that I shall not (as a very worthy gentleman has ventured to do) repeat any of the symptoms predicted in those two chapters; but confine myself to one or two plain and

express signals, mentioned in other parts of holy writ. 1. The utter abolition and destruction of both the eastern and western antichrist, will prepare the way for Christ's appearance, and the world's dissolution. This yet remains to be effected; but will most surely be brought about, in God's appointed time. And the people of God, who shall be alive at that period, may, when they see the total extermination of Mahometanism and Popery, lift up their heads with joy, knowing that the Judge is at the door, and that their redemption draweth nigh. 2. The calling in of the Jews, when a nation shall be born in a day, and they shall unanimously believe in him whom their fathers have pierced; will be another event, preparatory to the consummation of all things. So will, 3. the universal conversion of the whole Gentile world; when Christ will take all the heathen as the right of his inheritance.

# SPEECH,

DELIVERED

AT THE QUEEN'S ARMS, NEWGATE-STREET,

ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

"*Whether unnecessary cruelty to the Brute creation, is not criminal?*"

Mr. PRESIDENT,

THE humane tendency of the question reflects great honour on the benevolence of the gentleman who proposed it; and the manner in which it has been discussed, since I came into the room, does equal credit to the gentlemen who have spoke to it. However, I must own my dissent, in some particulars, from the worthy gentleman who gave his sentiments last: and, as he thought proper to make very free with the gentleman who spoke before him, I hope he will excuse me, if I make modestly free with him. And though the observation, I intend to animadvert upon, was rather a deviation from the question; yet I shall follow him in the deviation, for a while: and the more willingly, as it may conduce, indirectly, to throw some light on the subject now under debate.

That gentleman asserted, peremptorily and absolutely, that "All things whatever, in and upon the terraqueous globe, were created purely and solely for the service of man." Such an opinion may serve to gratify our vanity and sooth our pride: but, how far it is founded on reality, will appear from examining into matter of fact.

We will suppose, that a ship, on a foreign voyage, drops anchor on a foreign coast. A poor sailor takes the opportunity of bathing in the sea. An hungry shark either scents or descries him; darts forward to the unhappy victim; snaps him in two, and swallows him at a couple of mouthfuls. I would ask; was the shark made for the use of that man? or was that man made for the use of the shark? So long, therefore, as there are not only useless creatures in the world, (useless, as to us, though they doubtless answer some valuable purpose in the great scheme of creation (but creatures apparently noxious, and fatal, sometimes, to our very lives; so long, I think, if demonstration carries any conviction, we must grant that there are some creatures not made for the service of men. But, to omit sharks, rattlesnakes, and crocodiles, let us descend to creatures of much lower class. Will that gentleman seriously say, for instance, that London bugs, fleas, and some other reptiles I could mention, are made for human benefit? Ask any mendicant in the streets, what he thinks; he will tell you, that they seem rather made to tire our patience, and to mortify our pride. I allow, indeed, that man is the centre, in which the generality of created good may be said to terminate: for which we ought to be thankful to the most wise and gracious Creator of all things. But then it is, to me, equally evident, that the same adorable being consulted, and does consult, the happiness of every individual creature to which he has given life: else why such various, and so admirably adapted accommodations for their respective provision and welfare.

I now come directly to the question; and, without hesitation, or limitation, deliver it as my stedfast belief that all wanton exercise of power over, and all unnecessary cruelty to, the brute creation, is truly and properly criminal. Several good reasons have been urged, in proof of this, by some gentlemen

who spoke before me: but I own, there is one argument, which has more weight with me than all that have been yet offered, and which I wonder no gentlemen has hitherto mentioned. I firmly believe, that beasts have souls; souls, truly and properly so called: which, if true, entitles them, not only to all due tenderness, but even to a higher degree of respect than is usually shown them.

I lay down two things, Mr. President, as data: 1. that mere matter is incapable of thinking; and, 2. that there is no medium between matter and spirit.

That brutes think, can hardly, I imagine, be questioned by any thinking man. Their not being able to carry their speculations so high as we do, is no objection to their cogitability. Even among men, some are more able reasoners than others. And we might perhaps, reason no better than the meanest animal that breathes, if our souls were shut up in bodies, no better organized than theirs. Nay, brutes not only think when they are awake, and their senses are in full exercise; but they frequently think, even in their sleep. A dog, as he lies extended by the fireside, will sometimes show, by the whining noise he makes, and by the catching motion of his feet, that he is enjoying an imaginary chace in a dream. A cat, dissolved in sleep, will often by various starts and agitation, convince any unprejudiced observer, that she fancies her prey full in view, and is preparing to seize it. I remember a cat of my own, who one evening enjoyed, for five or eight minutes, this pleasing illusion: until at last, her eagerness, agitation of spirits, and a spring she endeavoured to make, awoke her from her golden dream: upon which she showed as much concern and disappointment, as she could discover by disconsolate mewing. Now, there can be no imagination without thought: nay, these two are, perhaps, in fact, things synonymous: nor can there be thought, without some degree of reason: and that

which reasons, must be something superior to matter, however modified, and essentially different from it. I have not time to enter deep into the subject. I cannot, however, help giving it as my judgment, that, before a man can, coolly and deliberately, deny rationality to brutes, he must have renounced his own. And why that noble faculty, which, pro gradu, produces similar effects in us and them, should be called by a different name in them and us, I own myself quite at a loss to determine. If I can at all account for it, the pride of man is the only reason I am able to assign. We are, right or wrong, for monopolizing every excellence to ourselves, and for allowing little or none to other animals is forgetting, that inferior animals are not only our fellow-creatures, but (if it may be said without offence) our elder brethren: for their creation was previous to ours.—If, then, brutes reason; that in them which does reason, must be spirit, or an immaterial principle: which principle, being immaterial, must be perfectly simple and uncompounded: if perfectly simple, it must be, in its own nature, incorruptible; and, if incorruptible, immortal. And I will honestly confess, that I never yet heard one single argument urged against the immortality of brutes; which, if admitted, would not, mutatis mutandis, be equally conclusive against the immortality of man.

What I have offered, may seem strange and surprising to those who have not viewed the subject on both sides of it. It would have seemed strange to myself, a few years ago.

I accounted for all the internal and external operations of brutes, upon the principles of mechanism. But I was soon driven from this absurdity, by dint of evidence. Was a cat a mere machine, she could not distinguish a mouse from a kitten; but would be equally indifferent to both. Was a dog a mere machine, he would not distinguish his master from a rabbit: much less would he pursue the latter, and

caress the former: any more than a clock can know its owner, or one statue can hunt another.——I next had recourse to instinct. But I soon found, upon careful examination, that this is a mere term without an idea: a name, for we know not what: and he that would distinguish between instinct and reason (for, if instinct has any meaning at all, it must signify reason), must first find a medium between matter and spirit. But I am rather for expunging the word quite, as a term, which, in its present application at least, signifies just nothing: and, like all such unmeaning terms, either conduces to no end; or, at least, to a very bad one, as only tending to confuse and embarrass, and "darken counsel by words without knowledge." By the way, this is not the only word, which, was I to unite an expurgatory index to our language, I would utterly proscribe. But, whatever I retain, chance, fortune, luck, and instinct, should have no quarter; because they are wells without water; terms without ideas; and words are only so far valuable, as they are the vehicles of meaning.

I cannot wholly dismiss the subject, without observing another particular, in favour of the spirituality of brutes: namely, what is commonly the facultas locomotiva, or power of voluntary motion from place to place. Motion itself, simply considered, is not always an indication of an intelligent agent within: but voluntary motion is, and must be such in the very nature of things. An inanimate body, set in motion by some exterior cause, would, as is universally allowed, go on, in a strait line, ad infinitum, if not obstructed in its course by the air or some other intervening body. All involuntary motion, therefore, being necessarily, and in its own nature, rectilinear; and the motions of beasts not being necessarily rectilinear, but in all directions, and in any direction, as occasion requires (for they, in their way, act as much pro re natâ as we can do); it fol-

lows, that every beast has something within, which judges, consults, and directs; which, as it cannot possibly be material, must be spiritual. If a dog was running, from this end of the room to the other, and one of the gentlemen, by the opposite chimney-piece was to stand up in a menacing posture, the animal would immediately cease to proceed in a right line, because he would know that would be the wrong one for his safety; he would turn back, and, if possible, escape at the door. What is this, but practical reason? and excellence, by the bye, in which many of those creatures surpass the generality of mankind. The language of such conduct is apparently this: "If I go forward, danger is before me: if I return, or go another way, I may, probably, escape this danger: ergo, I will do the latter." Could we ourselves in similar circumstances, argue more justly, or act more wisely? From which, I conclude, that, as there is evidently something in every living creature, which discerns what is good, and puts him upon pursuing it; which likewise points out what is pernicious, and puts him upon avoiding; this discerning, reasoning, inclining principle must be essentially different from the mechanic system it actuates, and can be no other, in plain English, than an intelligent soul. Should it be objected, that "this intelligent principle does not always produce these beneficial effects, witness the case of a dog who swallows poison under the apprehension of a dainty;" I answer, man himself is liable to deceptions of a similar kind. Yet he would be a disgrace to the name of man, who should, upon this account, question either the immateriality or immortality of his own soul.

I pay, likewise, great attention to another consideration. That beasts are possessed of the five senses we value ourselves upon (though, perhaps, after all, every one of those senses may, in reality, be reducible to one, viz. feeling), in as great, and

sometimes much greater perfection than we; is a principle which I look upon as incontestible. Brutes are, if experience (which is practical demonstration) carries any authority, as sensible of pain and pleasure, as man. Rub a cat's head and she will purr; pinch her tail, and she will spit. Now I would ask, what is it that feels? The body, the flesh, the blood, the nerves? No: for a dead animal has all these, and yet feels not. It is the soul, Mr. President, that feels and perceives, through the medium of the senses: for, what are the senses; but channels of conveyance, and a sort of mediators between outward objects and the mind? In what way matter acts upon spirit, is unknown: but that it does so, every day's experience proves.

Memory likewise belongs to brutes. Memory is the power of recalling past ideas, and of recollecting past events. The person who denies that beasts remember, must either be a man of no observation, or have a very bad memory himself. Now there can be no memory without ideas: no ideas, without thinking (for, the forming, the comparison, and the combination of ideas are thought): no thinking, without some degree of reasoning: and no reasoning, without a reasonable soul. There may be thought, without memory: but memory there can be none, without thought. And the passions likewise are as strong in them, as in us.

On the whole, needless cruelty to beasts is highly criminal. Especially if we take in these two additional observations; 1. that the same Deity, who has made them what they are, might have made us what they are: i. e. he might have imprisoned our spirits in their bodies, had it been his pleasure. And though I look upon the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration to be in itself both groundless and absurd; yet its tendency was certainly a very good one, as it necessarily induced men to be tender of the lives and happiness, the being and the well-being of

the animal creation. 2. As another very cogent motive to this benevolence of disposition and behaviour, let us never forget, that all the miseries and hardships under which the brute creation labour, together with mortality itself to which they are liable, are primarily owing to the sin of man: which reflection must influence every considerate and truly ingenious mind, to treat them with the greatest lenity upon that very account. Nor can I omit just mentioning an argument, which may be deduced from the care of providence. If God hath respect to the meanest of his creatures, and despises not the workmanship of his own hands; let us, whose supreme glory it is to resemble deity, imitate him in these amiable and graceful views. As Dr. Young truly and nobly observes, "There is not a fly, but infinite wisdom is concerned both in its structure and its destination." How dare we then be destroyers of their ease, which we ought to promote; or wantonly deprive them of that life, which we cannot restore?

# SPEECH,

DELIVERED

AT THE QUEEN'S ARMS, NEWGATE-STREET,

ON THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

"*Whether our good works will add to our degree of future glory?*"

Mr. PRESIDENT,

FROM what I have the pleasure to know of the worthy gentleman, who is the father of the question, I have too great an opinion of his good sense, and of the deference he pays to divine revelation, to suppose he believes there is any sort of merit in human works. I dare say no person here need be acquainted, that to merit, properly signifies to earn; and, originally, the word was applied to soldiers, and other military persons, who, by their labours in the field, and by the various hardships they frequently underwent during the course of a campaign, as also by other services they might occasionally render to the commonwealth, were said merere stipendia, to merit, or earn their pay: which they might properly be said to do, because they yielded, in real service, an equivalent to the state, for the stipend they received; which was therefore due to them in justice. Hence I apprehend, we come at the true meaning of the word merit; from this view of the point, I think it is very clear, in the very nature of things, exclusive of scripture, that there can be no such thing as merit in our best obedience. One man may merit of another; but all mankind together cannot merit from the hand of God. If we advert to revelation, nothing can be

clearer than this important truth. Salvation, in all its various branches, is expressly declared to be "not of works," and elsewhere "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us:" for which one of the reasons assigned is, "lest any man should boast:" which he would surely, and might justly do, if his works were meritorious of divine acceptance, could justify him in the sight of God, and entitle him to heaven. The law will admit of no righteousness, as a sufficient ground of justification, but such, and such a righteousness only, as in every respect whatever, and from first to last, comes up to the standard of that law: which no human righteousness, since the primitive transgression of Adam, ever did come up to, or ever will. Hence it follows, that all men being sinners, and of consequence not having a perfect righteousness to bring, either the whole human race must be condemned, or those who are saved must be saved by a righteousness out of themselves, and to be had from another. Who this other is, in virtue of whose complete obedience the church of his elect are justified from all things, the scripture plainly declares, when it tells us, that "Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believes:" that the same blessed person, "who knew no sin, was made sin," that is, a sin-bearer and a sin-offering, "for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" and, to mention no more passages, that, "as, by the disobedience of one, many were made, or constituted sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made and constituted righteous." If, then, we are justified by the alone imputation of Christ's righteousness, it more evidently follows, that good works on our part, are in no sense, meritorious of heaven: neither as causes, nor conditions; for, however plausible and innocent the word condition may sound; a condition is no more than a softer name for cause;

as being something, on account of which, something else is given or done. And that works can be neither causes, nor (which amounts to the same thing) conditions of justification, is clear; because the performance of a condition necessarily precedes the reception of a benefit suspended on that condition; whereas, good works (and works are then only evangelically good, which proceed from the united principles of faith in Christ and love to God, which faith and love are the fruits of grace previously bestowed) do not go before, but follow after justification, which is the express doctrine both of scripture, and of the church of England, in her 12th and 13th articles, and throughout the whole book of homilies. Therefore, to put good works before justification, is making the effect prior to the cause; and representing the fountain as flowing from the stream, instead of deducing the stream from the fountain. I shall only add one observation more, on the head of merit. Whoever believes the scriptures, must admit, that whatever good is either wrought in man, or done by him, is the fruit of God's effectual grace. Was it otherwise, it would follow, that God is not the source of all good: but that men may be good, independently of the Creator; and of consequence, that there are some good and perfect gifts, which do not descend from the Father of lights. How rational this is in itself, and how honourable to the Deity, must be left to the judgment of those gentlemen, who think fit to depart from the doctrines of the Reformation, by espousing the system of Arminius. If therefore, the good we are enabled to do, is done in the strength of divine grace; it follows, not that the Deity is indebted to us, but that we are unspeakably indebted to him, for working in us both to will and to do the things that are well pleasing in his sight. "Are good works then, and moral obedience, unnecessary?" Quite the reverse. They are of indispensible necessity. They must and will be

wrought, by all who are born from above. They are the evidences of faith, and the necessary consequences of justification. Believe in Christ for justification, and lead a bad life if you can. It is impossible. They that are of God, will do the works of God.

I have been perhaps tedious; but what is said has a close connection with the question before us; which is, "Whether our good works, &c." Here, I think, is room for a distinction. I am of opinion, that good works, extensive usefulness, and eminent sufferings for Christ, will in one respect, be followed by a proportionable degree of glory; and, in another, not. I am one of those old-fashioned people, Mr. President, who believe the doctrine of the millennium: and that there will be two distinct resurrections of the dead: 1st. of the just; and 2dly. of the unjust; which last resurrection, of the reprobate, will not commence till a thousand years after the resurrection of the elect. In this glorious interval of one thousand years, Christ, I apprehend, will reign in person over the kingdom of the just: and that during this dispensation, different degrees of glory will obtain; and "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." This reward, though temporary, will surely be more than equivalent to any thing we can be enabled to do or suffer for God, during the short span of our present life. And yet, though the reward will vastly transcend the work; still, between temporal obedience, and this temporal recompence, there is some little proportion: whereas, between temporal obedience, and the eternal weight of glory, there is no proportion at all. And to me it seems very clear, that, whatever difference of bliss and honorary distinctions may obtain during the millenniary state; I am inclined to think, both by scripture and reason, that in the heavenly glory which will immediately succeed the other, all the saints will be exalted to an equality of happiness, and crowned alike. In the

course of the present argument, I have been forced to take the doctrine of the millennium for granted: time not allowing me to even intimate an hundredth part of the proof by which it is supported. I would only observe, to those who have not considered that subject, that it would be prudent in them to suspend their judgment about it, and not be too quick in determining against it, merely because it seems to lie out of the common road. As doctrines of this kind should not be admitted hastily, so they should not be rejected prematurely. Upon the whole, I give it as my opinion, that the reward of the saints, during the personal reign of Christ upon earth, will be greater or less in proportion to their respective labours, sufferings, and attainments: but that, seeing they are loved alike, with one and the same everlasting love of God the Father; that their names are in one and the same book of life; that they are all justified by the same perfect righteousness of Christ, redeemed and washed from all their sins in the blood of the same Saviour, regenerated by the same Spirit, made partakers of like precious faith, and will in the article of death be perfectly (and, of course, equally) sanctified by divine grace; for these, and other reasons that might be mentioned, I am clearly of opinion, that, in the state of ultimate glory, they will be on a perfectly equal footing with regard to final blessedness, both as to its nature and degree; and, as the parable expresses it, "receive every man his penny."

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## RELATIVE TO THE NATIONAL DEBT.

### WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1775 *.

Qu. 1. SUPPOSING this debt to be only 130 millions of pounds sterling at present (although it is much more), and that it was all to be counted in shillings: that a man could count at the rate of 100 shillings per minute, for twelve hours each day, till he had counted the whole; how much time would he take in doing it?

Answ. 98 years, 316 days, 14 hours, and 40 minutes.

Qu. 2. The whole of this sum being 2600 millions of shillings, and the coinage standard being 62 shillings in the Troy pound, what is the whole weight?

Answ. 41 million, 935 thousand, 484 Troy pounds.

Qu. 3. How many carts would carry this weight, supposing a ton in each?

Answ. 20,968 carts.

Qu. 4. Supposing a man could carry 100 pound weight, from London to York; how many men would it require, to carry the whole?

Answ. 419 thousand, 355 men.

Qu. 5. If all these men were to walk in a line, at two yards distance from each other, what length of road would they all require?

Answ. 476 miles, half a mile, and 70 yards.

* This remarkable calculation is introduced here, for the sake of the spiritual improvement subjoined by the author.

Qu. 6. The breadth of a shilling being one inch, if all these shillings were laid in a straight line, close to one another's edges; how long would the line be that would contain them?

Answ. 41,035 miles; which is 16,035 miles more than the whole circumference of the earth.

Qu. 7. Supposing the interest of this debt to be only $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, what does the whole annual interest amount to?

Answ. 4 million, 550 thousand pounds sterling.

Qu. 8. How doth the government raise this interest yearly?

Answ. By taxing those who lent the principal, and others.

Qu. 9. When will the government be able to pay the principal?

Answ. When there is more money in England's treasury alone, than there is at present in all Europe.

Qu. 10. And when will that be?

Answ. Never.

SPIRITUAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE FOREGOING.

Quest. What is the moral law of God?

Answ. The transcript of his own most holy nature, and the standard of human purity and obedience.

Quest. Will this law make any allowance for human infirmity, or admit any abatement of the perfect conformity which it demands?

Answ. It makes no allowance for the former, nor will it dispense with a single grain of the latter.

Quest. How does that appear?

Answ. It appears, from the undeniable current of scripture: where the language of the law is, Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect, Matth. v. 48.—Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law, to do them, Gal. iii. 10. The indispensible requisition is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself, Luke x. 27. Hence in the eye of the law, and the estimation of the law-giver, the risings of wrath are tantamount to murder; the calling any man a fool, exposes us to the penalty of hell-fire; and impure thought brings us under the condemnation of actual adultery, Matth. v. 22. 28.

Quest. What is the grand inference from these alarming premises?

Answ. That inference, which the apostle terms an evident one, and evident indeed it is; viz. that no man is justified by the law, in the sight of God, Gal. iii. 11. For a single breach of the law renders us guilty of the whole, James ii. 10. And one idle word lays us open to the vengeance of God, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, Matth. xii. 36.

Quest. Supposing a person was to break the law but once in 24 hours; to how many would his sins amount, in a life of ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty years?

Answ. If he was to fail in moral duty but once a day, his sins, at ten years of age, would amount to 3 thousand, 6 hundred, and 50.—At twenty years end, the catalogue would rise to 7 thousand, 3 hundred.—At thirty, to 10 thousand, 9 hundred, and 50.—At forty, to 14 thousand, 6 hundred.—At fifty, to 18 thousand, 2 hundred, and fifty.—At sixty, to 21 thousand, 9 hundred.—At seventy, to 25 thousand, 5 hundred, and 50.—At eighty, to 29 thousand, 2 hundred.

Quest. What if a person's sins are supposed to bear a double proportion to the foregoing estimate? That is, let us imagine him to sin twice a day, or once every twelve hours?

Answ. In that case, his sins, at the age of ten years, will be multiplied to 7 thousand, 3 hundred.—At twenty, to 14 thousand, 6 hundred.—At thirty, to 21 thousand, 9 hundred.—At forty, to 29

thousand, 2 hundred.—At fifty, to 36 thousand, 5 hundred.—At sixty, to 43 thousand, 8 hundred.—At seventy, to 51 thousand, 1 hundred.—At eighty, to 58 thousand, 4 hundred.

Quest. We must go farther still. What if a man's sins keep exact pace with every hour of his life? i. e. we will suppose him to sin 24 times a day.

Answ. His sins will then amount, in a life of ten years, to 87 thousand, 6 hundred.—At twenty years of age, they will accumulate to 175 thousand, 2 hundred.—At thirty, to 262 thousand, 8 hundred.—At forty, to 350 thousand, 4 hundred.—At fifty, to 438 thousand.—At sixty, to 525 thousand, 6 hundred.—At seventy, to 613 thousand, 2 hundred.—At eighty, to 700 thousand, and 8 hundred.

Quest. Is there a single minute, from the first of our existence to the very article of death, wherein we come up to the whole of that inward and outward holiness which God's all-perfect law requires?

Answ. Most certainly not.

Quest. Of how many sins, then, is each of the human race guilty, reckoning only at the rate of one sin for every minute?

Answ. At ten years old, we (according to that method of calculation) are guilty of no fewer than 5 millions, 256 thousand sins.—At twenty, of ten millions, and 512 thousand.—At thirty of 15 millions, 568 thousand.—At forty, of 21 millions, and 24 thousand.—At fifty, of 26 millions, and 280,000.—At sixty, of 31 millions, and 536 thousand.—At seventy, of 36 millions, and 792 thousand.—At eighty, of 42 millions, and 48 thousand.

Quest. May we not proceed abundantly farther yet? Sixty seconds go to a minute. Now, as we never, in the present life, rise to the mark of legal sanctity; is it not fairly inferrible, that our sins multiply with every second of our sublunary duration?

Answ. It is too true. And, in this view of the matter, our dreadful account stands as follows.—At

ten years old, each of us is chargeable with 315 millions, and 36 thousand sins.—At twenty, with 630 millions, and 720 thousand.—At thirty, with 946 millions, and 80 thousand.—At forty, with 1261 millions, 440 thousand.—At fifty, with 1576 millions, and 800 thousand.—At sixty, 1892 millions, and 160 thousand.—At seventy, with 2207 millions, and 520 thousand.—At eighty, with 2522 millions, 880 thousand.

Quest. When shall we be able to pay off this immense debt?

Answ. Never. Eternity itself, so far from clearing us of the dreadful arrear, would only add to the score; by plunging us deeper and deeper, even to infinity. Hence, the damned will never be able to satisfy the justice of the Almighty Creditor.

Quest. Will not divine goodness compound for the debt, by accepting less than we owe?

Answ. Impossible. Justice, holiness, and truth, will and must have their own, even to the very uttermost farthing. God himself (with profoundest veneration be it spoken) must become an Antinomian, and renounce himself, ere he can forego his essential attributes, and repeal his inviolable law, by offering violence to those, and by making void the claims and the threatnings of this.

Quest. Who then, can do us any good, in this respect?

Answ. Not all the angels in heaven, nor all the men that ever did or ever shall exist. Others cannot help us, nor can we help our own selves.

Quest. If so, are we not lost, without remedy, and without end?

Answ. In ourselves, we are. But (sing, O heavens!) God's own arm brought salvation.

Quest. How so? What is there, wherewith to counterbalance such an exceeding and astonishing weight of guilt?

Answ. " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law; being made a curse for us." Gal. iii. 13.—This, this will not only counterbalance, but infinitely overbalance, all the sins of the whole believing world.

Quest. If the personal short comings and misdoings of each sinner in particular, amount to so vast a multitude, who can calculate the extent of the whole national debt, the entire aggregated sum, which (abstracted from her union with Christ) lies on the church at large, that elect nation, whom he has redeemed from among men?

Answ. The arithmetic of angels would be unable to ascertain the full amount.

O thou covenanting, thou incarnate, thou obeying, thou bleeding, thou dying, thou risen, thou ascended, thou interceding Son of God! not all the seraphs thou hast created, not all the innumerable saints thy love hath ransomed, will be able to comprehend, much less to display, along the endless line of eternity itself, the length, the breadth, the depth, the height, of a sinner's obligations to thee.

Quest. If, on one hand, we are each constrained to cry out, with the believers of old, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified by works of human performance;—Who can tell how oft he offendeth? —How shall man be just with God? If thou contend with him for his transgressions, he cannot answer thee for one of a thousand;—My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head;—Forgive us our debts, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea; what has faith to say?

Answ. Faith, on the other hand, can reply, in the very words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin: and there is now no condemnation [ουδεν κατακριμα, not one condemnation] to them that are in Christ Jesus. So that we may sing with Dr. Watts,

" Believing sinners free are set,
For Christ hath paid their dreadful debt."

We may add, in the words of another sweet singer in Israel,

" Who now shall urge a second claim?
The law no longer can condemn;
Faith a release can show:
Justice itself a friend appears;
The prison-house a whisper hears,
Loose him, and let him go!"

Quest. What return can believers render to the glorious and gracious Trinity, for mercy and plenteous redemption like this?

Ans. We can only admire and bless the Father, for electing us in Christ, and for laying on him the iniquity of us all:—the Son, for taking our nature and our debts upon himself, and for that complete righteousness and sacrifice, whereby he redeemed his mystic Israel from all their sins;—and the coequal Spirit, for causing us (in conversion) to feel our need of Christ, for inspiring us with faith to embrace him, for visiting us with his sweet consolations by shedding abroad his love in our hearts, for sealing us to the day of Christ, and for making us to walk in the path of his commandments.

*The manner of Stoning a criminal to death, among the ancient Jews.*

STONING was one of the four capital punishments, among the Jews, inflicted for the greater and more enormous crimes: especially, for blasphemy and idolatry.

The malefactor was led out of the consistory (where he had received sentence); at the door whereof a person stood, with a napkin in his hand, and a man on horseback at some distance from him: that, if any one came, and said he had something to offer for the deliverance of the criminal, the horseman (on the other's waving the napkin) might give notice, and cause the offender to be brought back to a farther hearing.

He had two grave persons to go along with him to the place of execution, and to exhort him to confession by the way. A crier went before him, proclaiming who he was, what his crime, and who his witnesses. When arrived at the fatal spot, which was raised two cubits from the ground, he was first stript, then stoned, and afterwards hanged. He was to continue hanging, until sun set: and then, being taken down, he and his gibbet were buried together. [See Cave's Life of St. Stephen, sect. 19.]

*Manner of Whipping among the ancient Jews.*

THIS punishment was not to exceed 40 stripes: and therefore, the whip, with which it was to be inflicted, being made of three thongs, and each blow giving three stripes, they never laid on any criminal, more than 13 blows. Because, 13 of those blows made 39 stripes: and to add another blow, would have been a transgression of the law, by adding two stripes over and above 40. [See Prideaux's Connect. part ii. book v.]

*Remarkable Description of St. Paul's Person.*

How little stress is to be laid on external appearance! This prince of apostles seems to hint, concerning himself, that his bodily presence was not calculated to command respect at first sight, 2 Cor. x. 10. St. Chrysostom terms him, homuncionem tricubitalem, "a little man, about three cubits [or four feet and a half] in height.

Lucian, or whoever is the author of the Philopatris, is supposed to have had St. Paul in view, where he introduces "A Galilean" (for so the Christians were contemptuously styled), "rather bald headed, with an aquiline nose, who travelled through the air into the third heaven."

But, of all other writers, Nicephorus Callistus has given us the most circumstantial account of St. Paul's person [Lib. ii. cap. 37.]—"St. Paul was small of stature, stooping, and rather inclinable to crookedness: pale faced, of an elderly look, bald on the head. His eyes, lively, keen, and cheerful: shaded in part, by his eyebrows, which hung a little over. His nose, rather long, and not ungracefully bent. His beard, pretty thick of hair, and of a sufficient length; and, like his locks, interspersed with grey."

END OF VOL. III.